MARVEL

EPIC COLLECTION

AVENGERS

THE COLLECTION OBSESSION

FINGEROTH • THOMAS • HARRAS • NICIEZA • LIM • EPTING

EPIC COLLECTION

AVENGERS

THE COLLECTION OBSESSION

VOLUME 21

1991-92

AVENGERS #334-344 & ANNUAL #20, AVENGERS: DEATH TRAP — THE VAULT
AND MATERIAL FROM INCREDIBLE HULK ANNUAL #17, NAMOR, THE SUB-MARINER ANNUAL #1,
IRON MAN ANNUAL #12 & AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL #6

EPIC COLLECTION

The Epic Collections feature the best characters and stories from Marvel's vast history. Volumes are not published in chronological order — so start your collection today with this edition!

AVENGERS — THE COLLECTION OBSESSION

WRITERS:
DANNY FINGEROTH, ROY THOMAS, DANN THOMAS, PETER DAVID, SCOTT LOBDELL, BOB HARRAS & FABIAN NICIEZA WITH **ERIC FEIN, PETER SANDERSON, MICHAEL HIGGINS & DAVID MICHELINIE**

PENCILERS:
RON LIM, KEVIN WEST, RON WAGNER, JAMES FRY, TOM MORGAN, GEORGE FREEMAN, ANDY KUBERT, STEVE EPTING & PAUL ABRAMS WITH **JEFF MOORE, MICHAEL BAIR & ED MURR**

INKERS:
JIM SANDERS III, FRED FREDERICKS, MIKE WITHERBY, ERIK LARSEN, TOM MORGAN & TOM PALMER WITH **BUD LaROSA, MICHAEL BAIR, AL MILGROM, DANNY BULANADI, ANDREW PEPOY, BOB WIACEK, TONY DEZUNIGA, REGGIE JONES & CHARLES BARNETT III**

COLORISTS:
JOE ROSAS, BOB SHAREN, RENÉE WITTERSTAETTER, KEVIN TINSLEY, GLYNIS OLIVER, MIKE THOMAS, CHRISTIE SCHEELE, ROB TOKAR & TOM PALMER WITH **GREGORY WRIGHT, STEVE BUCCELLATO, SARRA MOSSOFF, SCOTT MARSHALL, EVAN SKOLNICK & MARIE JAVINS**

LETTERERS:
JOE ROSEN, DAVE SHARPE, JANICE CHIANG, RICK PARKER, MICHAEL HEISLER, PHIL FELIX, BILL OAKLEY, JOHN COSTANZA & BRAD K. JOYCE WITH **YUG & MICHAEL HIGGINS**

ASSISTANT EDITORS:
LEN KAMINSKI, CHRIS COOPER, MARK POWERS & SUZANNE DELL'ORTO

EDITORS:
KELLY CORVESE, HOWARD MACKIE, RALPH MACCHIO, BOBBIE CHASE, TERRY KAVANAGH & NEL YOMTOV

FRONT COVER ARTISTS:
RON LIM, TOM PALMER & VERONICA GANDINI

BACK COVER ARTISTS:
RON LIM & TOM PALMER

AVENGERS CREATED BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

COLLECTION EDITOR: MARK D. BEAZLEY
ASSISTANT EDITOR: CAITLIN O'CONNELL
ASSOCIATE MANAGING EDITOR: KATERI WOODY
ASSOCIATE MANAGER, DIGITAL ASSETS: JOE HOCHSTEIN
SENIOR EDITOR, SPECIAL PROJECTS: JENNIFER GRÜNWALD
VP PRODUCTION & SPECIAL PROJECTS: JEFF YOUNGQUIST
RESEARCH & LAYOUT: JEPH YORK
PRODUCTION: COLORTEK & JOE FRONTIRRE
SVP PRINT, SALES & MARKETING: DAVID GABRIEL

DIGITAL MANAGER/PRODUCTION: TIM SMITH 3
DIGITAL PRODUCTION: KOU CHEN & RACHEL YOUNG

EDITOR IN CHIEF: C.B. CEBULSKI
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER: JOE QUESADA
PRESIDENT: DAN BUCKLEY
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: ALAN FINE

SPECIAL THANKS TO JUSTIN BACOLO & TOM PALMER

AVENGERS: DEATH TRAP, THE VAULT GN, 1991

AVENGERS ANNUAL #20, 1991
"A STORM IN SUBTERRANEA, PART I: OF MOLES AND MUTATES"
"THE HISTORY OF SUBTERRANEA"
"BURNING VISION"
"A WING AND A PRAYER"

INCREDIBLE HULK ANNUAL #17, 1991
"OLD AS THE HILLS"

NAMOR THE SUB-MARINER ANNUAL #1, 1991
"NEVER AGAIN"

IRON MAN ANNUAL #12, 1991
"A STORM IN SUBTERRANEA, PART IV: THE HOMECOMING"

AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL #6, 1991
"A STORM IN SUBTERRANEA, CHAPTER 5"

AVENGERS #334, JULY 1991
"FIRST ENCOUNTER"

AVENGERS #335, EARLY AUGUST 1991
"BLOODY ENCOUNTER"
"COLLECT AND PROCEED"

AVENGERS #336, LATE AUGUST 1991
"FOR HERE WE MAKE OUR STAND!"

AVENGERS #337, EARLY SEPTEMBER 1991
"MUD AND GLORY?"

AVENGERS #338, LATE SEPTEMBER 1991
"INFECTIOUS COMPULSIONS"

AVENGERS #339, EARLY OCTOBER 1991
"FINAL REDEMPTION"

AVENGERS #340, LATE OCTOBER 1991
"CLAY SOLDIERS"

AVENGERS #341, NOVEMBER 1991
"RAGE OF ANGELS"

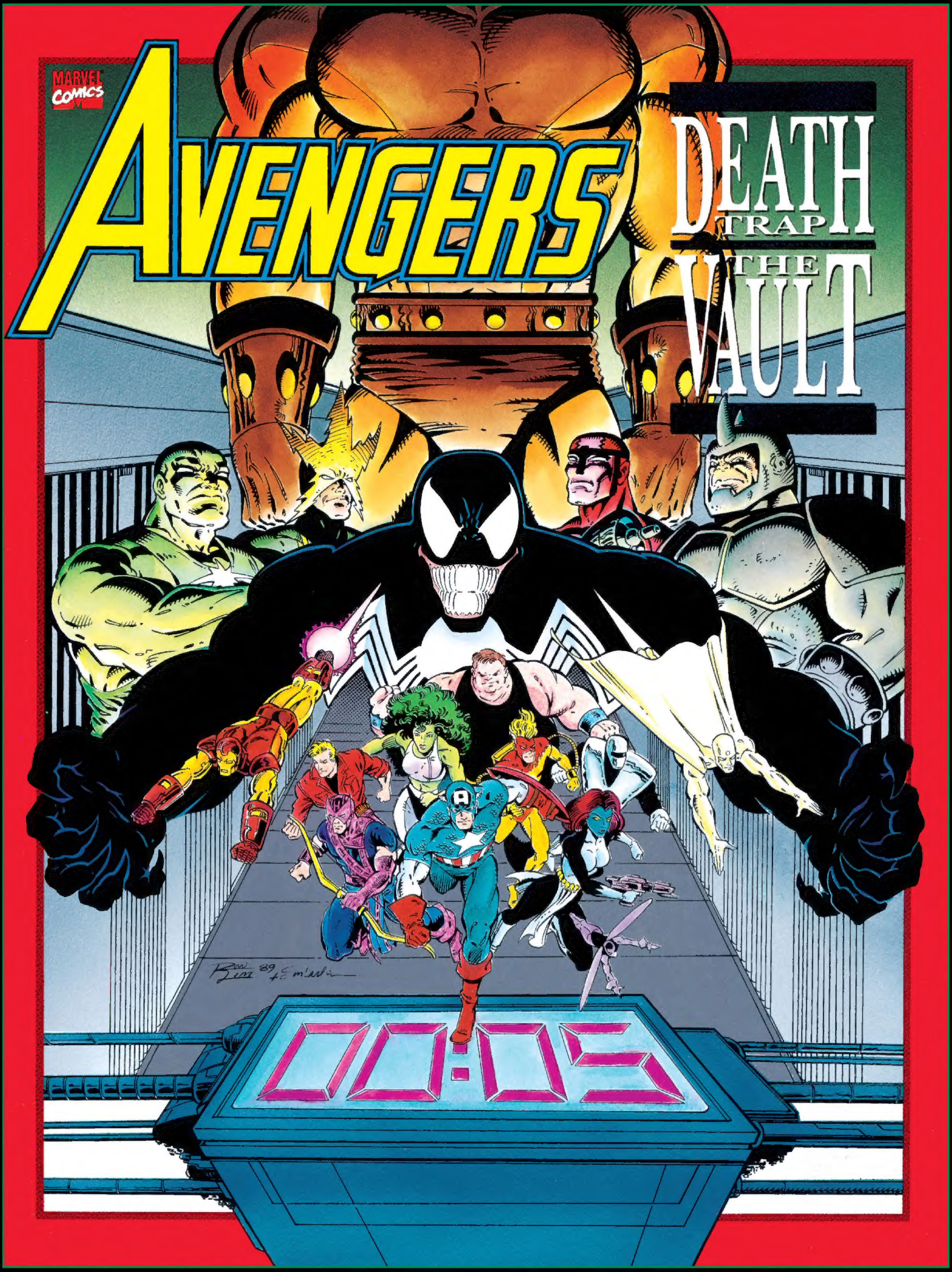
AVENGERS #342, DECEMBER 1991
"BY REASON OF INSANITY?"

AVENGERS #343, JANUARY 1992
"FIRST NIGHT"

AVENGERS #344, FEBRUARY 1992
"ECHOES OF THE PAST"

© 2018 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW.MARVEL.COM

THOUGH IT WAS PUBLISHED CIRCA *AVENGERS #338*, THE GRAPHIC NOVEL *AVENGERS: DEATH TRAP, THE VAULT* OCCURS IN THE RECENT PAST, BETWEEN *AVENGERS #318-319*.


MARVEL COMICS
AVENGERS
DEATH TRAP THE VAULT
00:05

AVENGERS®

DEATH TRAP
THE VAULT

danny **FINGEROTH**

writer

ron **LIM**

penciler

jim **SANDERS**
fred **FREDRICKS**

inkers

joe **ROSAS**

colorist

joe **KAUFMAN**

designer

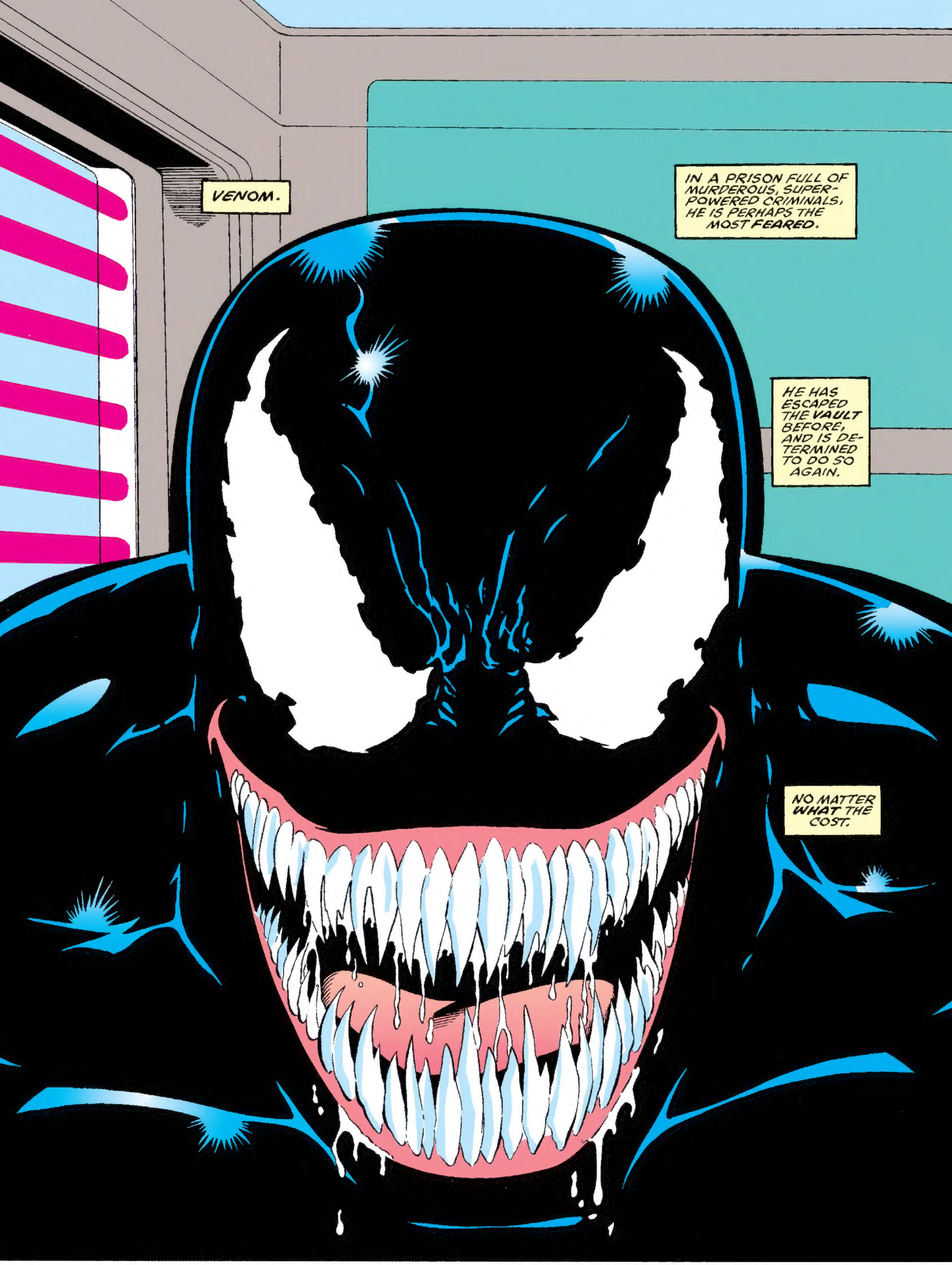
kelly **CORVESE**
howard **MACKIE**

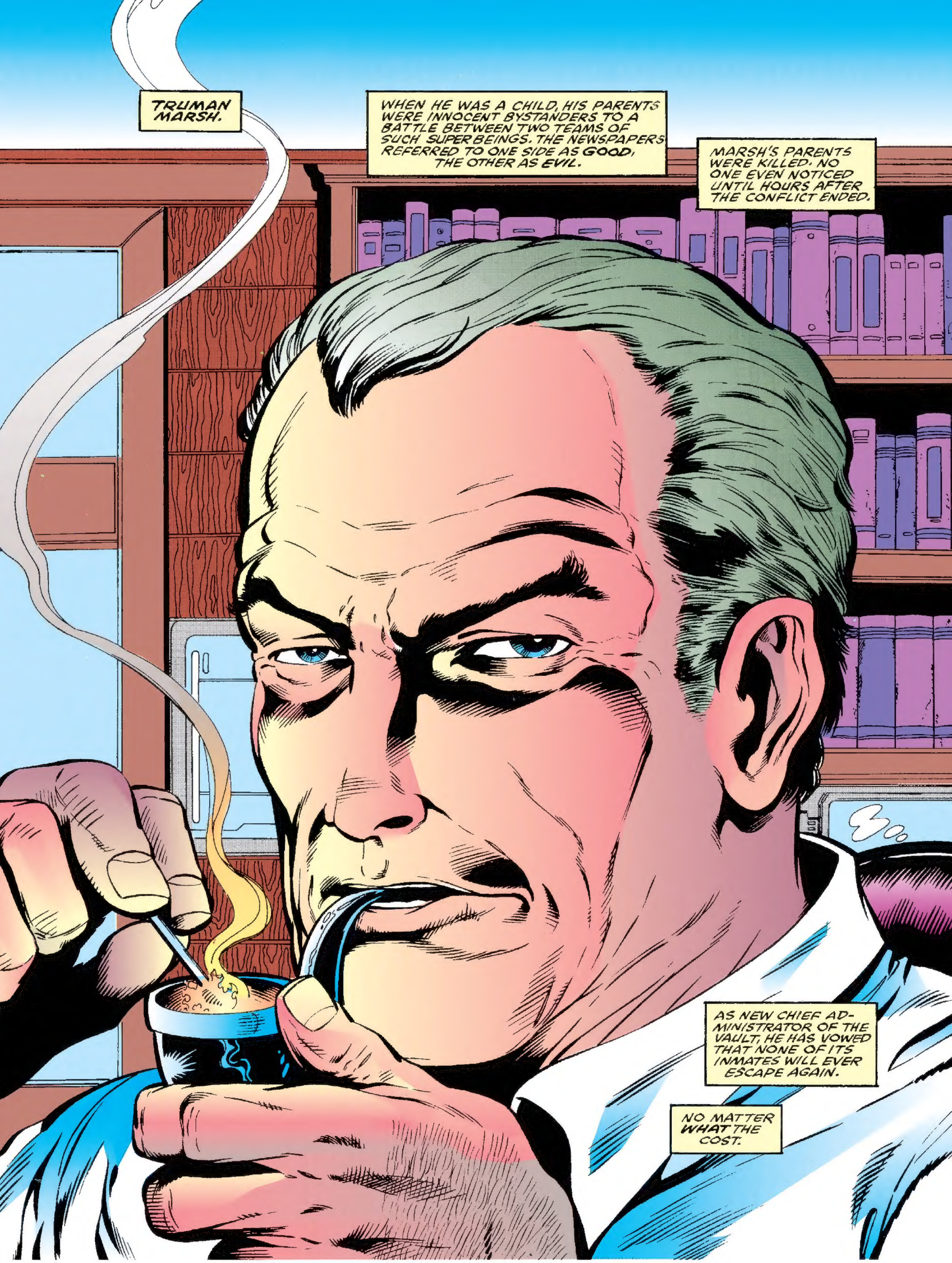
editors

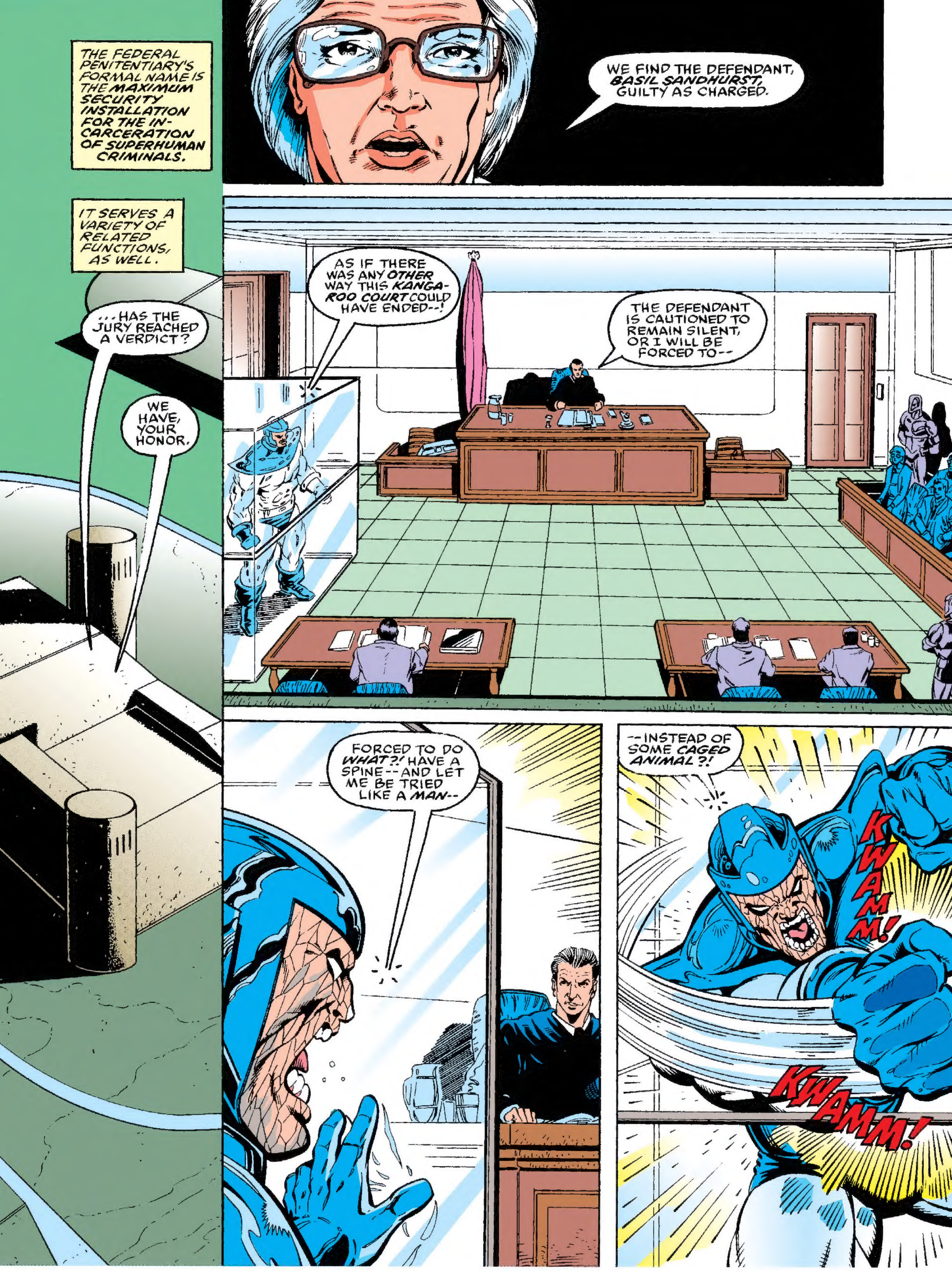
tom **DeFALCO**

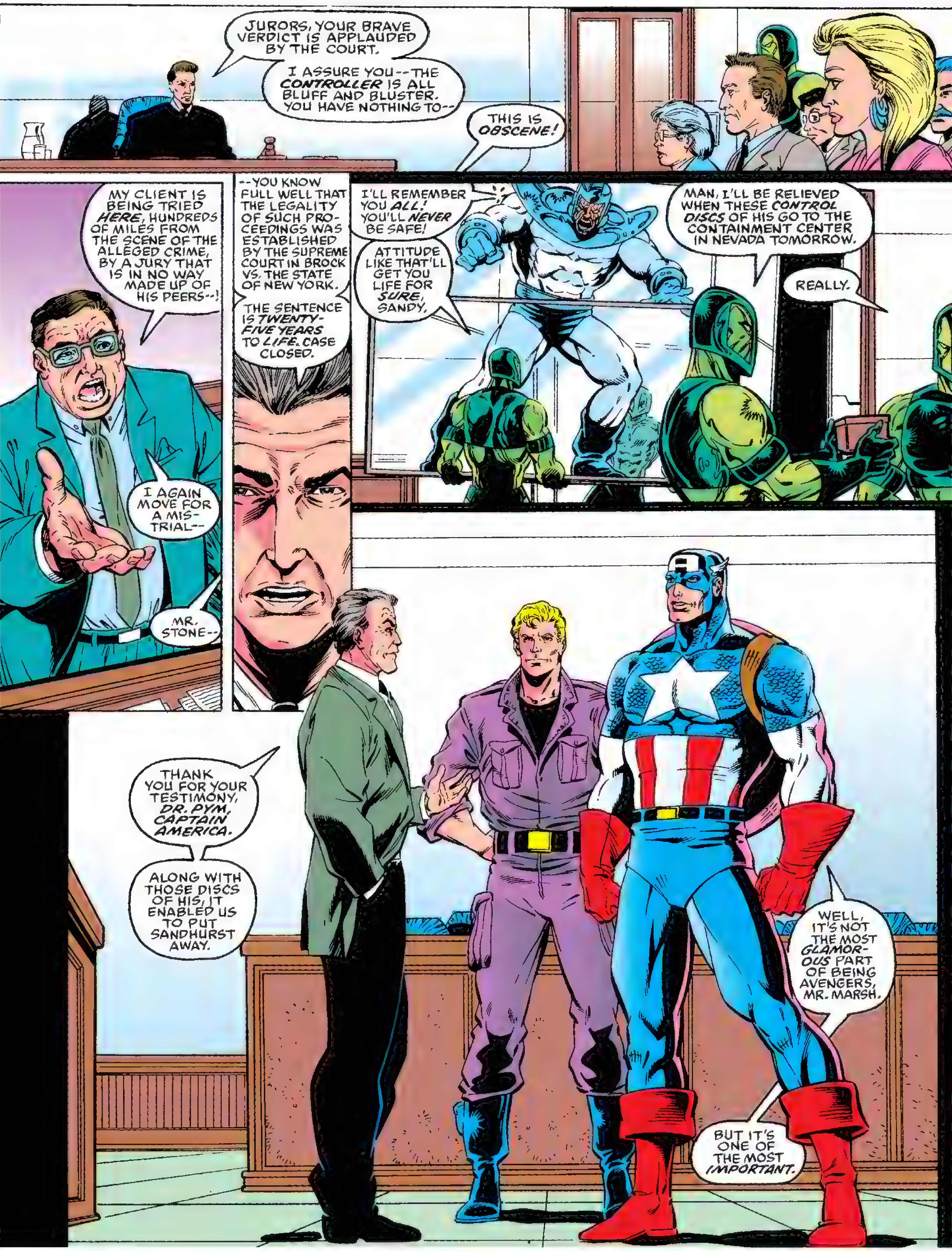
warden

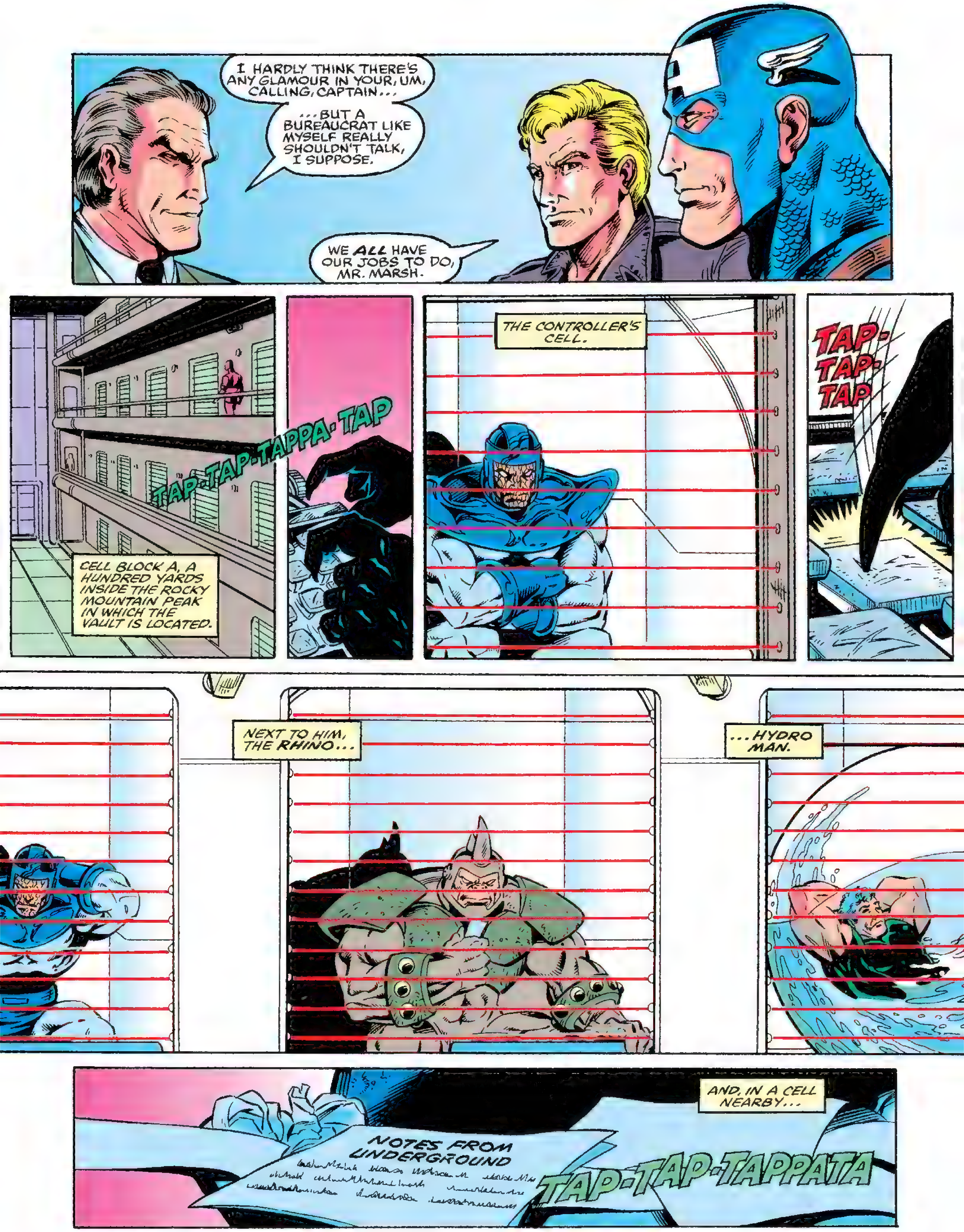
[redacted]

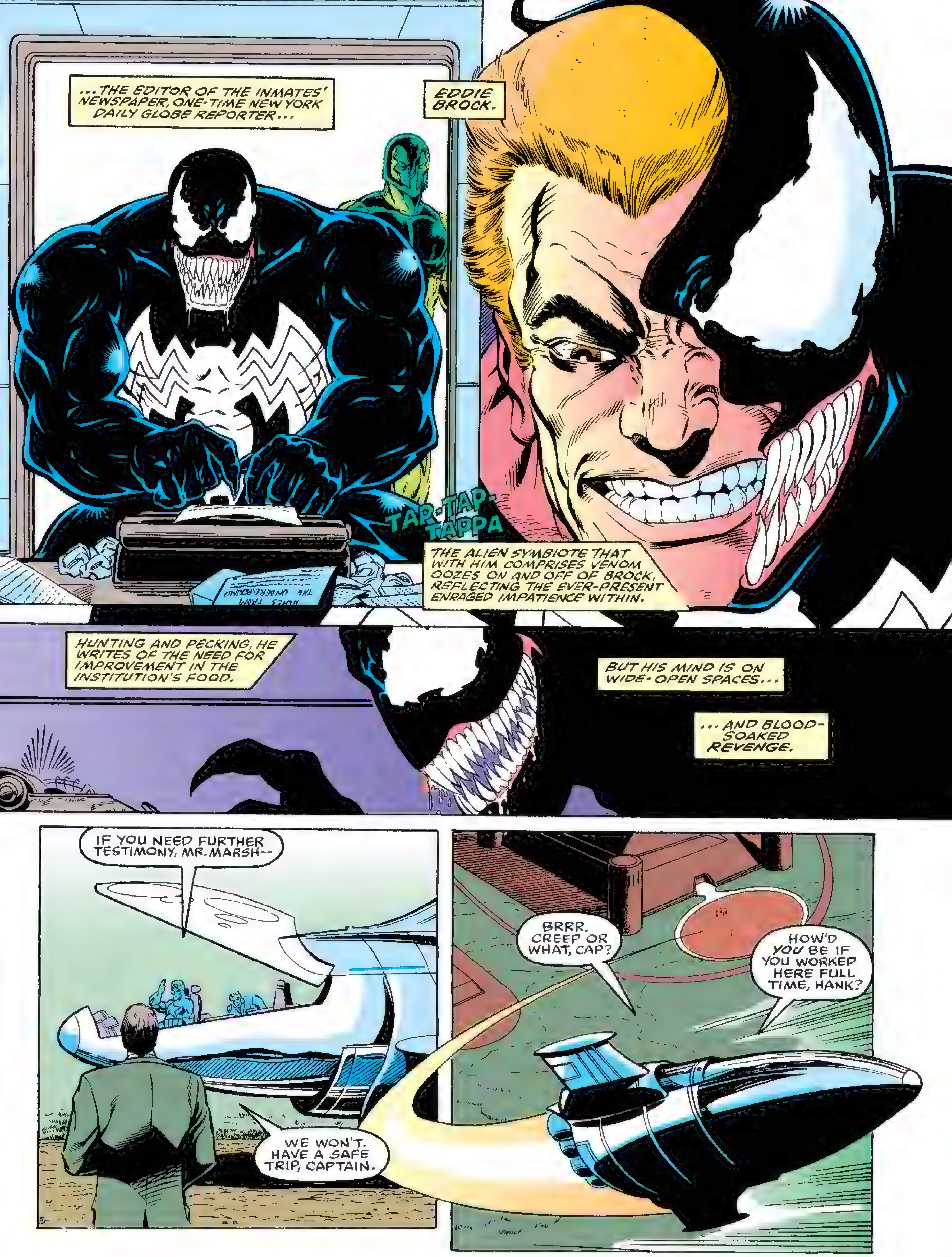

VENOM.
IN A PRISON FULL OF MURDEROUS, SUPER-POWERED CRIMINALS, HE IS PERHAPS THE MOST **FEARED**.
HE HAS ESCAPED THE **VAULT** BEFORE, AND IS DETERMINED TO DO SO AGAIN.
NO MATTER **WHAT** THE COST.

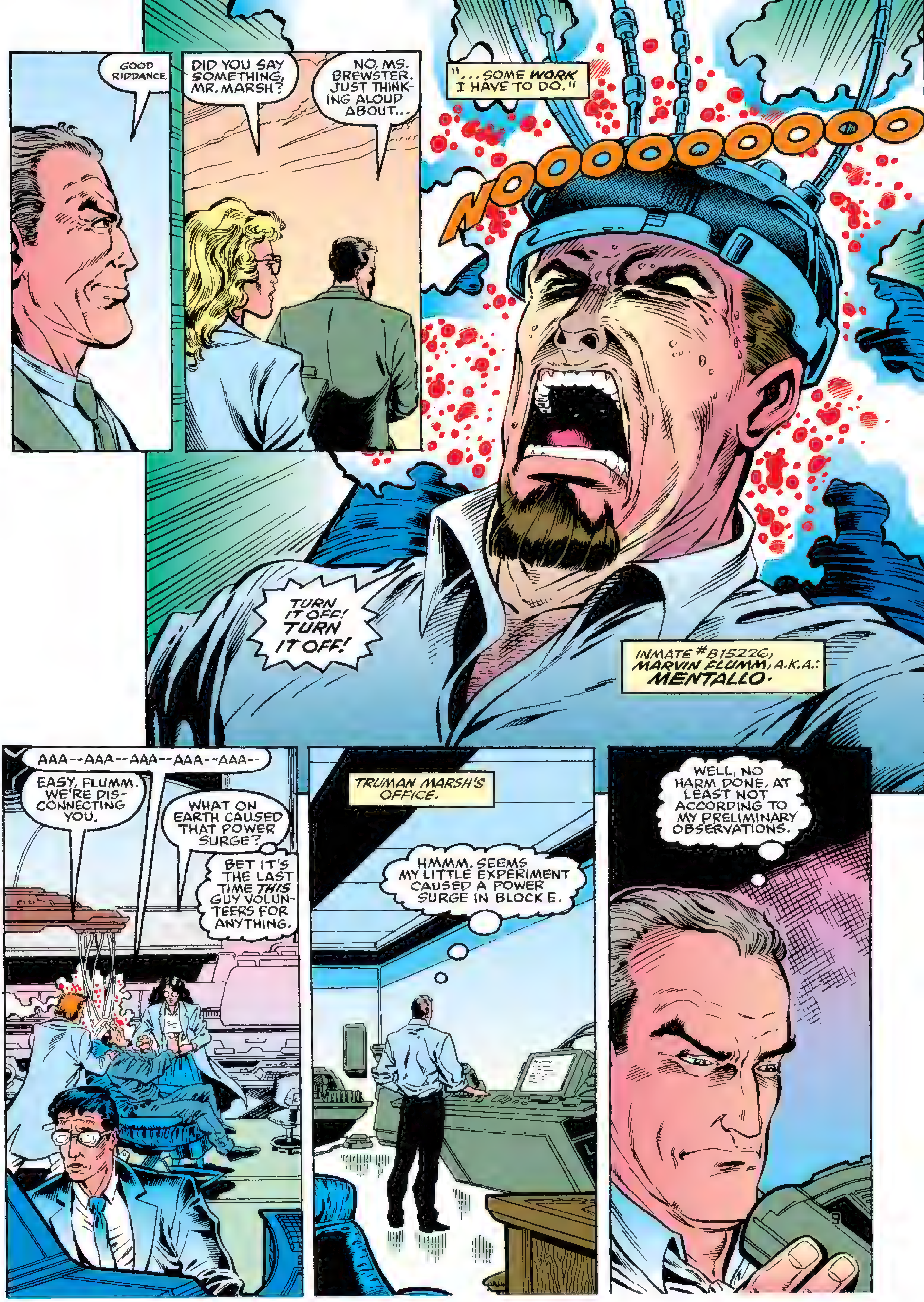

TRUMAN MARSH.
WHEN HE WAS A CHILD, HIS PARENTS WERE INNOCENT BYSTANDERS TO A BATTLE BETWEEN TWO TEAMS OF SUCH SUPER BEINGS. THE NEWSPAPERS REFERRED TO ONE SIDE AS **GOOD**, THE OTHER AS **EVIL**.
MARSH'S PARENTS WERE KILLED. NO ONE EVEN NOTICED UNTIL HOURS AFTER THE CONFLICT ENDED.
AS NEW CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR OF THE VAULT, HE HAS VOWED THAT NONE OF ITS INMATES WILL EVER ESCAPE AGAIN.
NO MATTER **WHAT** THE COST.

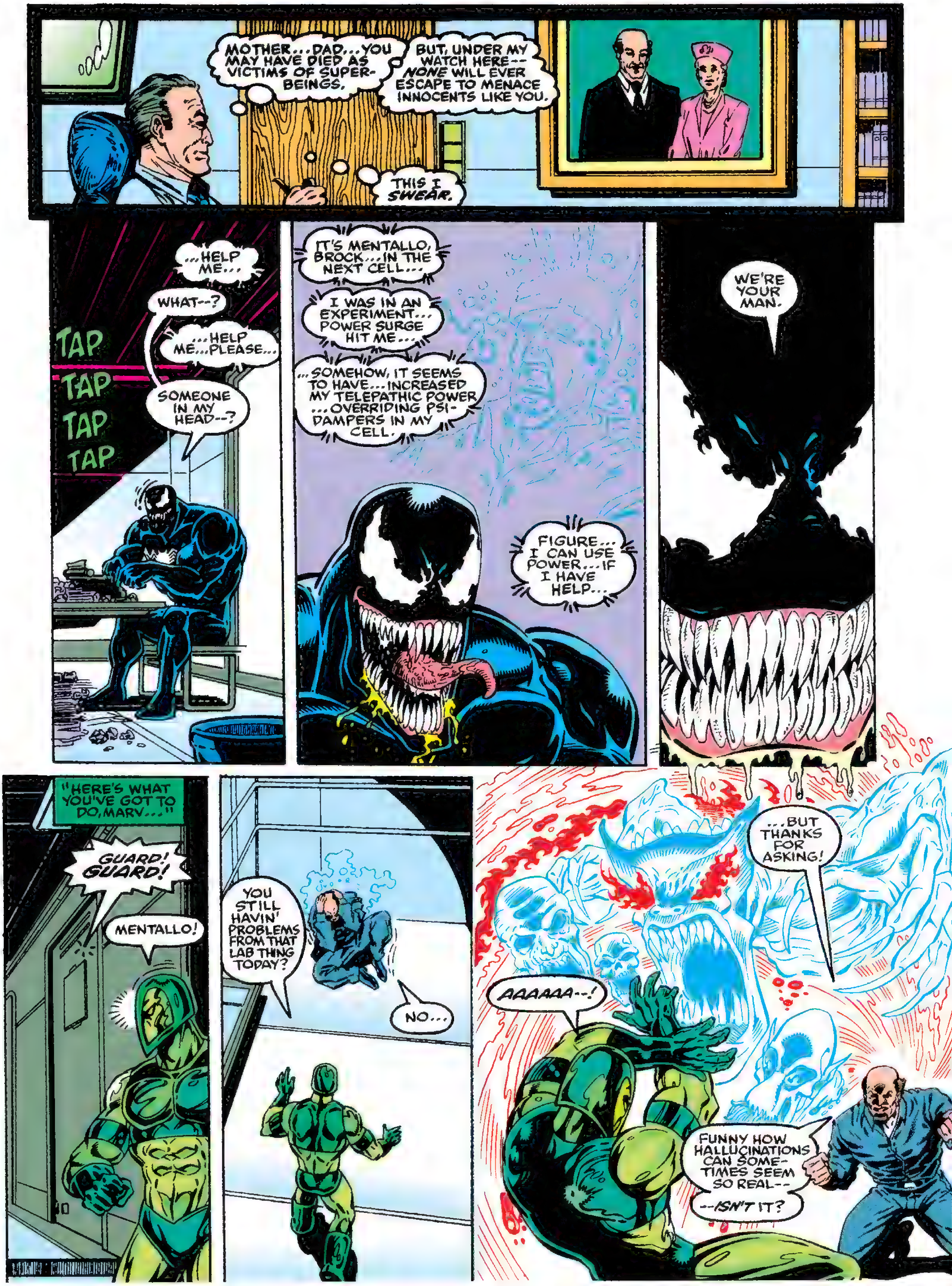

THE FEDERAL PENITENTIARY'S FORMAL NAME IS THE MAXIMUM SECURITY INSTALLATION FOR THE INCARCERATION OF SUPERHUMAN CRIMINALS.
WE FIND THE DEFENDANT, BASIL SANDHURST, GUILTY AS CHARGED.
IT SERVES A VARIETY OF RELATED FUNCTIONS, AS WELL.
...HAS THE JURY REACHED A VERDICT?
WE HAVE, YOUR HONOR.
AS IF THERE WAS ANY OTHER WAY THIS KANGAROO COURT COULD HAVE ENDED--!
THE DEFENDANT IS CAUTIONED TO REMAIN SILENT, OR I WILL BE FORCED TO--
FORCED TO DO WHAT?! HAVE A SPINE--AND LET ME BE TRIED LIKE A MAN--
--INSTEAD OF SOME CAGED ANIMAL?!
KWAMM!
KWAMM!

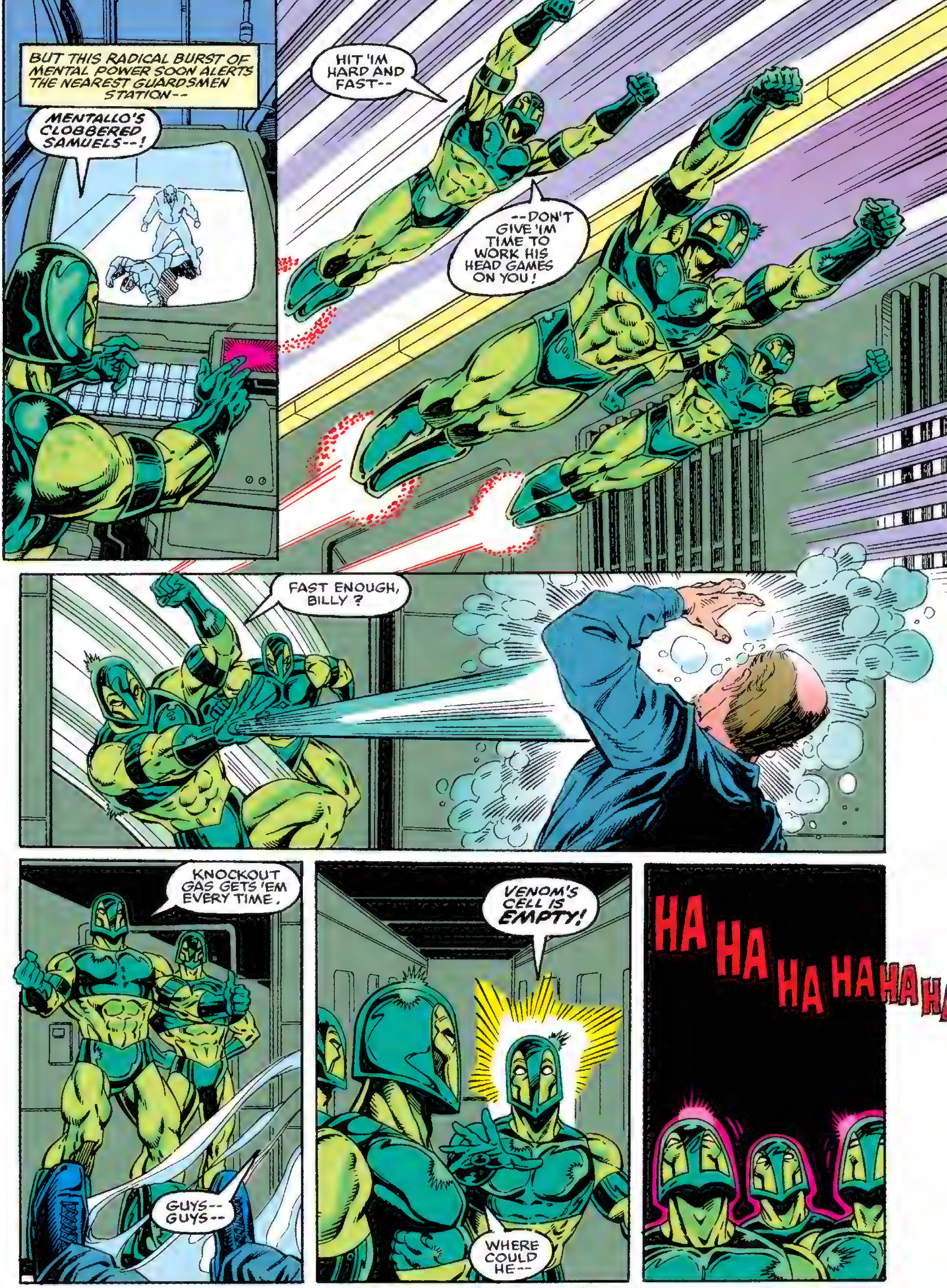

JURORS, YOUR BRAVE VERDICT IS APPLAUDED BY THE COURT.
I ASSURE YOU--THE *CONTROLLER* IS ALL BLUFF AND BLUSTER. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO--
THIS IS *OBSCENE!*
MY CLIENT IS BEING TRIED *HERE*, HUNDREDS OF MILES FROM THE SCENE OF THE ALLEGED CRIME, BY A JURY THAT IS IN NO WAY MADE UP OF HIS PEERS--!
I AGAIN MOVE FOR A MISTRIAL--
MR. STONE--
--YOU KNOW FULL WELL THAT THE LEGALITY OF SUCH PROCEEDINGS WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE SUPREME COURT IN BROCK VS. THE STATE OF NEW YORK.
THE SENTENCE IS *TWENTY-FIVE YEARS* TO *LIFE*. CASE CLOSED.
I'LL REMEMBER YOU *ALL!* YOU'LL *NEVER* BE SAFE!
ATTITUDE LIKE THAT'LL GET YOU LIFE FOR *SURE*, SANDY.
MAN, I'LL BE RELIEVED WHEN THESE *CONTROL DISCS* OF HIS GO TO THE CONTAINMENT CENTER IN NEVADA TOMORROW.
REALLY.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TESTIMONY, *DR. PYM, CAPTAIN AMERICA.*
ALONG WITH THOSE DISCS OF HIS, IT ENABLED US TO PUT SANDHURST AWAY.
WELL, IT'S NOT THE MOST *GLAMOROUS* PART OF BEING AVENGERS, MR. MARSH.
BUT IT'S ONE OF THE MOST *IMPORTANT*.

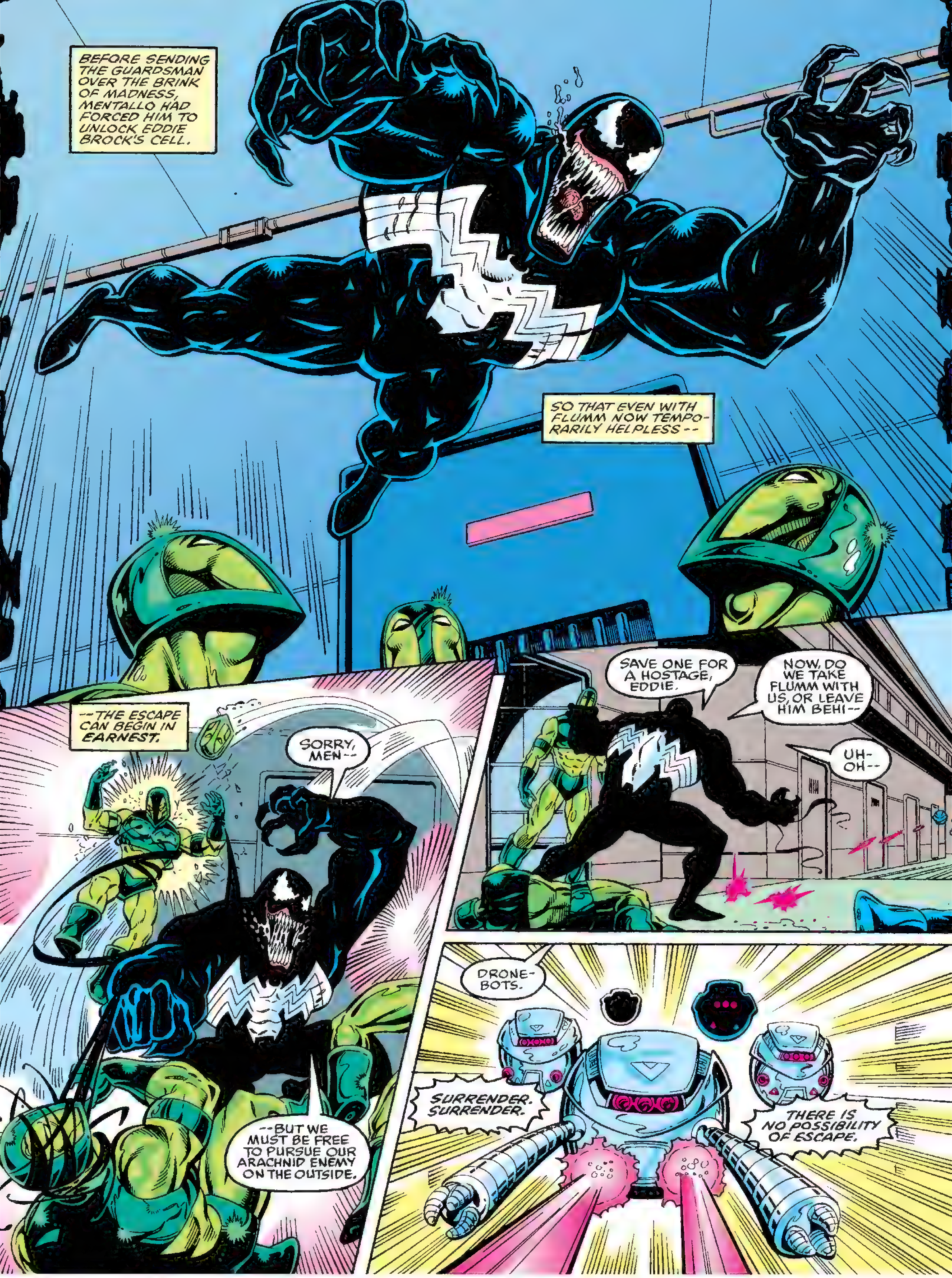

I HARDLY THINK THERE'S ANY GLAMOUR IN YOUR, UM, CALLING, CAPTAIN...
...BUT A BUREAUCRAT LIKE MYSELF REALLY SHOULDN'T TALK, I SUPPOSE.
WE ALL HAVE OUR JOBS TO DO, MR. MARSH.
CELL BLOCK A, A HUNDRED YARDS INSIDE THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN PEAK IN WHICH THE VAULT IS LOCATED.
TAP-TAP-TAP-TAPPA-TAP
THE CONTROLLER'S CELL.
TAP-TAP-TAP
NEXT TO HIM, THE RHINO...
...HYDRO MAN.
AND, IN A CELL NEARBY...
NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND
TAP-TAP-TAPPATA

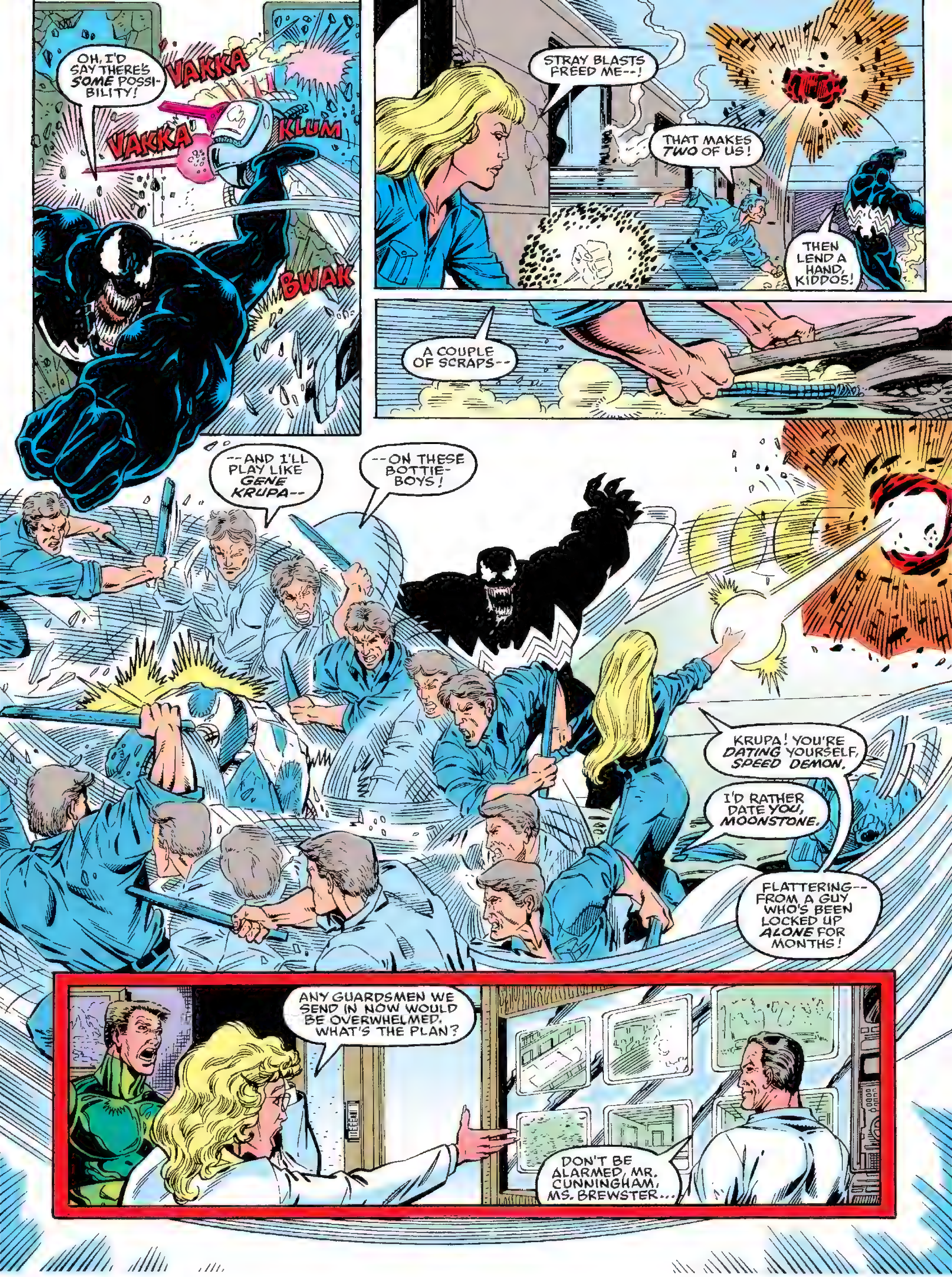

...THE EDITOR OF THE INMATES' NEWSPAPER, ONE-TIME NEW YORK DAILY GLOBE REPORTER...
EDDIE BROCK.
TAP-TAP-TAPPA
NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND
THE ALIEN SYMBIOTE THAT WITH HIM COMPRISES VENOM OOZES ON AND OFF OF BROCK, REFLECTING THE EVER-PRESENT ENRAGED IMPATIENCE WITHIN.
HUNTING AND PECKING, HE WRITES OF THE NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE INSTITUTION'S FOOD.
BUT HIS MIND IS ON WIDE-OPEN SPACES...
...AND BLOOD-SOAKED REVENGE.
IF YOU NEED FURTHER TESTIMONY, MR. MARSH--
WE WON'T. HAVE A SAFE TRIP, CAPTAIN.
BRRR. CREEP OR WHAT, CAP?
HOW'D YOU BE IF YOU WORKED HERE FULL TIME, HANK?

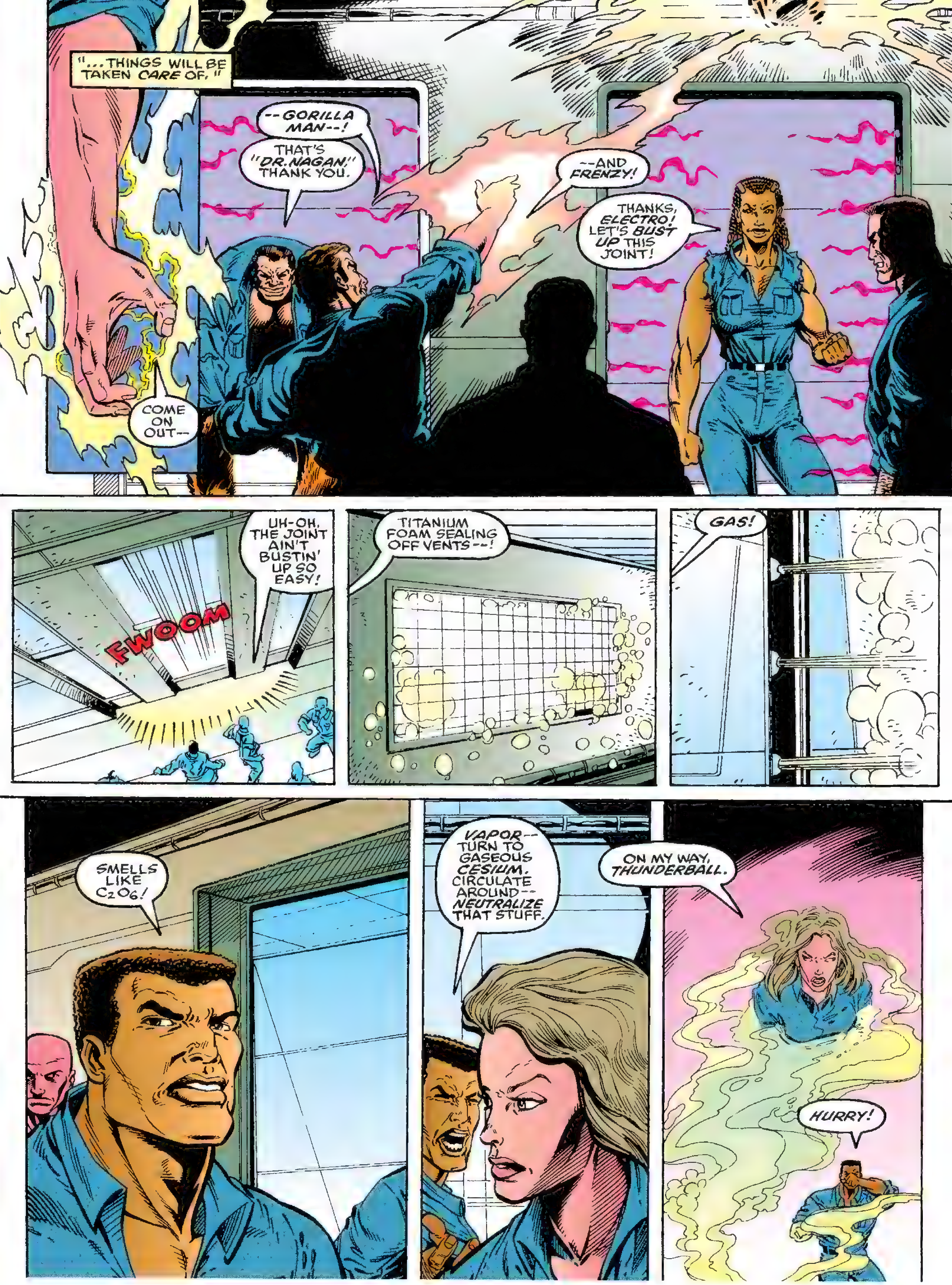

GOOD RIDDANCE.
DID YOU SAY SOMETHING, MR. MARSH?
NO, MS. BREWSTER. JUST THINKING ALOUD ABOUT...
"...SOME WORK I HAVE TO DO."
NOOOOOOOOOOOO
TURN IT OFF! TURN IT OFF!
INMATE #B15226, MARVIN FLUMM, A.K.A.: MENTALLO.
AAA--AAA--AAA--AAA--AAA--
EASY, FLUMM. WE'RE DISCONNECTING YOU.
WHAT ON EARTH CAUSED THAT POWER SURGE?
BET IT'S THE LAST TIME THIS GUY VOLUNTEERS FOR ANYTHING.
TRUMAN MARSH'S OFFICE.
HMMM. SEEMS MY LITTLE EXPERIMENT CAUSED A POWER SURGE IN BLOCK E.
WELL, NO HARM DONE. AT LEAST NOT ACCORDING TO MY PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

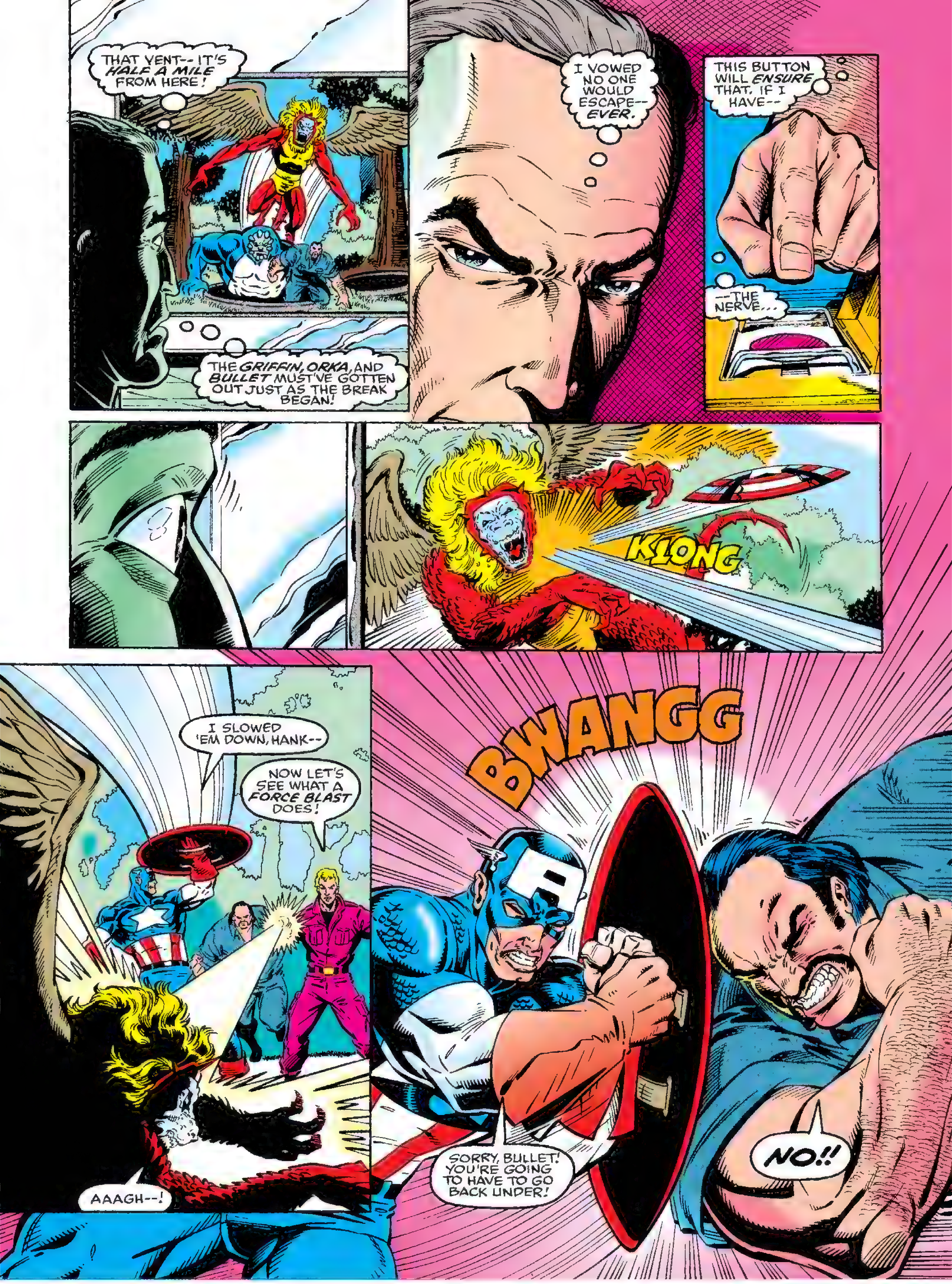

MOTHER... DAD... YOU MAY HAVE DIED AS VICTIMS OF SUPER-BEINGS.
BUT, UNDER MY WATCH HERE-- *NONE* WILL EVER ESCAPE TO MENACE INNOCENTS LIKE YOU.
THIS I *SWEAR.*
...HELP ME...
WHAT--?
...HELP ME...PLEASE...
SOMEONE IN MY HEAD--?
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
IT'S MENTALLO, BROCK... IN THE NEXT CELL...
I WAS IN AN EXPERIMENT... POWER SURGE HIT ME...
...SOMEHOW, IT SEEMS TO HAVE... INCREASED MY TELEPATHIC POWER ...OVERRIDING PSI-DAMPERS IN MY CELL.
FIGURE... I CAN USE POWER... IF I HAVE HELP...
WE'RE YOUR MAN.
"HERE'S WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO DO, MARV..."
GUARD! GUARD!
MENTALLO!
YOU STILL HAVIN' PROBLEMS FROM THAT LAB THING TODAY?
NO...
...BUT THANKS FOR ASKING!
AAAAAA--!
FUNNY HOW HALLUCINATIONS CAN SOME-TIMES SEEM SO REAL--
--*ISN'T* IT?

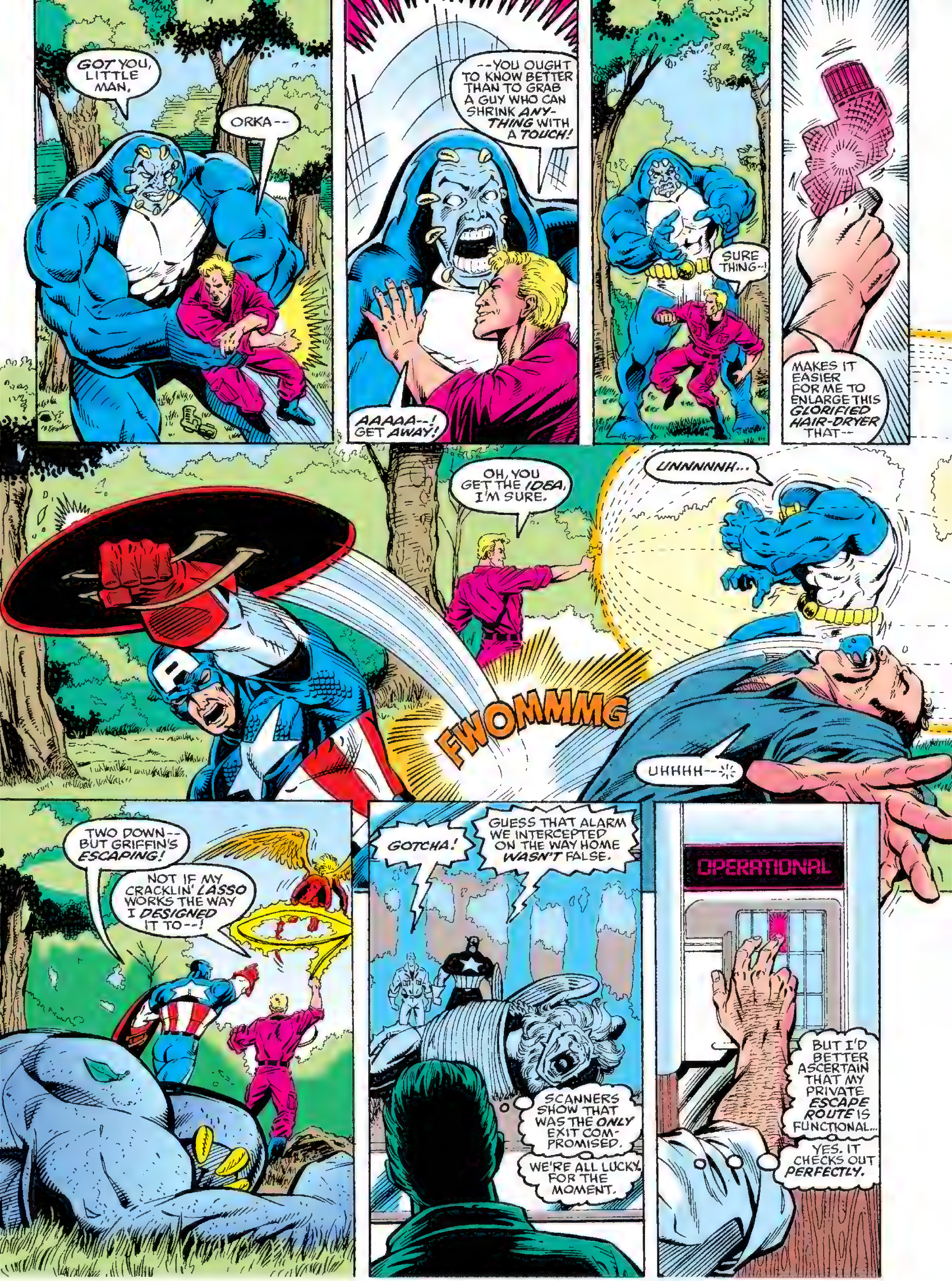

BUT THIS RADICAL BURST OF MENTAL POWER SOON ALERTS THE NEAREST GUARDSMEN STATION--
MENTALLO'S CLOBBERED SAMUELS--!
HIT 'IM HARD AND FAST--
--DON'T GIVE 'IM TIME TO WORK HIS HEAD GAMES ON YOU!
FAST ENOUGH, BILLY ?
KNOCKOUT GAS GETS 'EM EVERY TIME.
GUYS-- GUYS--
VENOM'S CELL IS EMPTY!
WHERE COULD HE--
HA HA HA HA HA HA

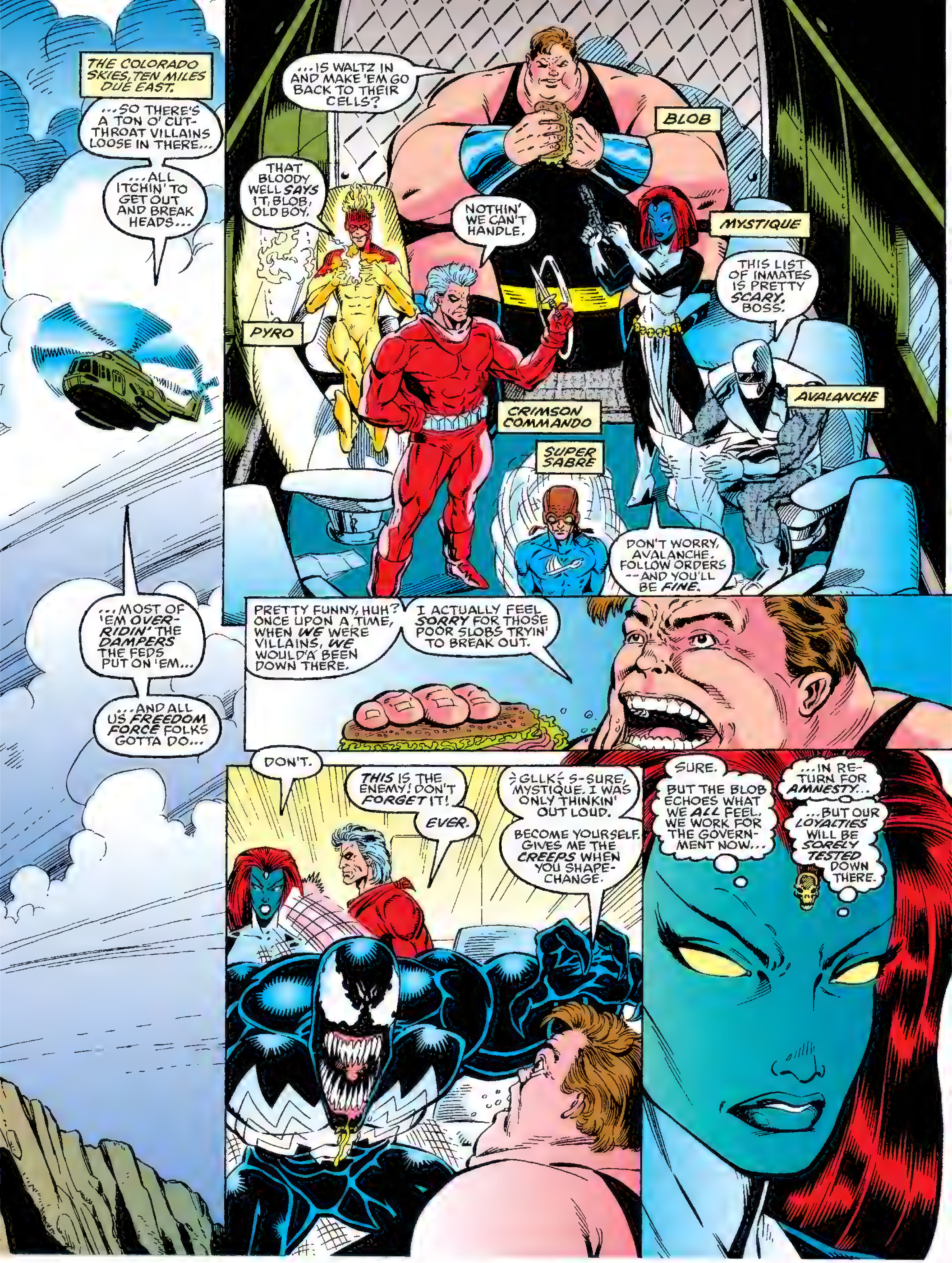

BEFORE SENDING THE GUARDSMAN OVER THE BRINK OF MADNESS, MENTALLO HAD FORCED HIM TO UNLOCK EDDIE BROCK'S CELL.
SO THAT EVEN WITH FLUMM NOW TEMPORARILY HELPLESS--
--THE ESCAPE CAN BEGIN IN *EARNEST.*
SORRY, MEN--
--BUT WE MUST BE FREE TO PURSUE OUR ARACHNID ENEMY ON THE OUTSIDE.
SAVE ONE FOR A HOSTAGE, EDDIE.
NOW, DO WE TAKE FLUMM WITH US, OR LEAVE HIM BEHI--
UH-OH--
DRONE-BOTS.
SURRENDER. SURRENDER.
THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF ESCAPE.

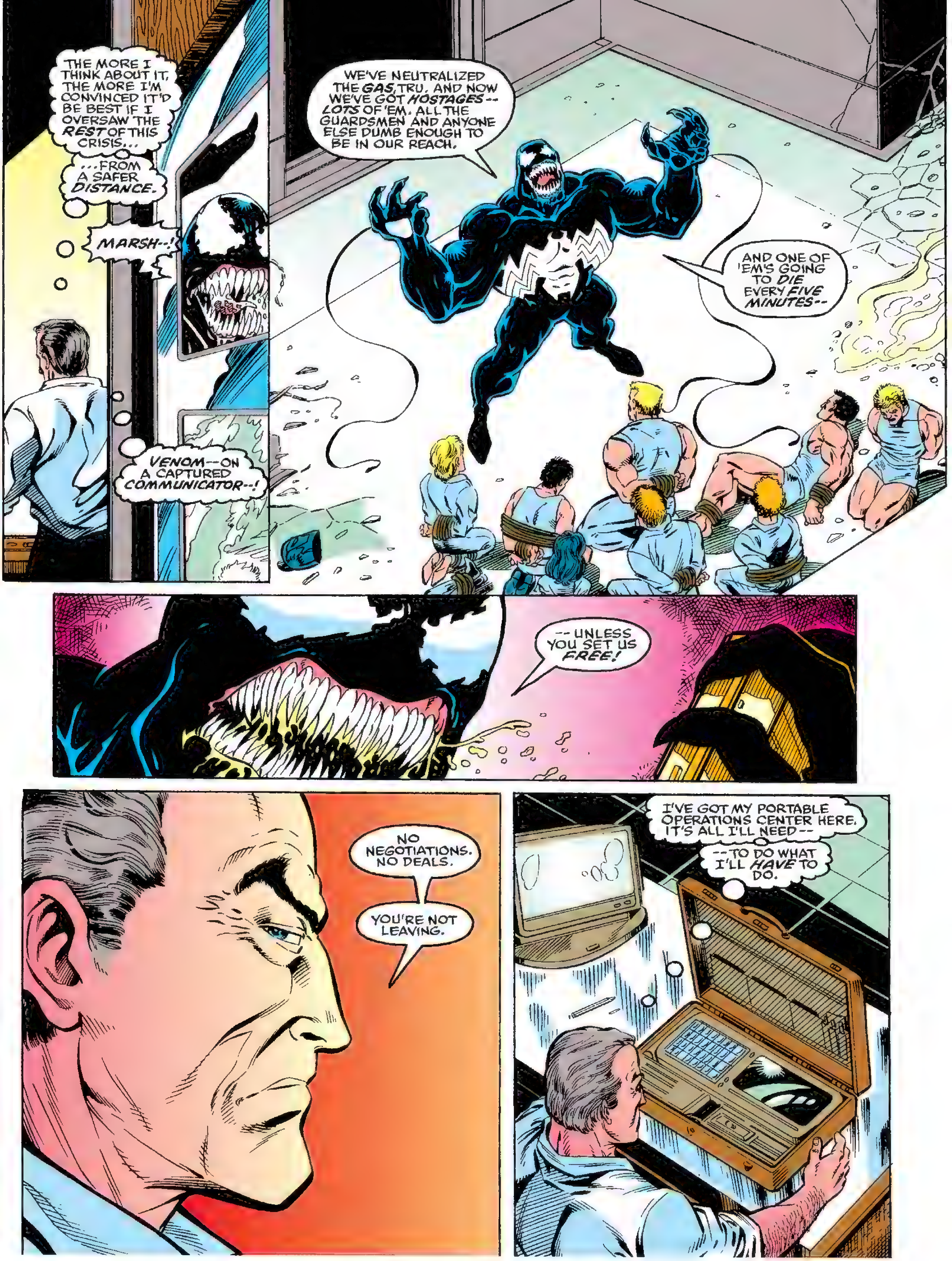

OH, I'D SAY THERE'S *SOME* POSSIBILITY!
VAKKA
VAKKA
KLUM
BWAK
STRAY BLASTS FREED ME--!
THAT MAKES *TWO* OF US!
THEN LEND A HAND, KIDDOS!
A COUPLE OF SCRAPS--
--AND I'LL PLAY LIKE *GENE KRUPA*--
--ON THESE BOTTIE-BOYS!
KRUPA! YOU'RE *DATING* YOURSELF, *SPEED DEMON*.
I'D RATHER DATE *YOU*, *MOONSTONE*.
FLATTERING--FROM A GUY WHO'S BEEN LOCKED UP *ALONE* FOR MONTHS!
ANY GUARDSMEN WE SEND IN NOW WOULD BE OVERWHELMED. WHAT'S THE PLAN?
DON'T BE ALARMED, MR. CUNNINGHAM, MS. BREWSTER...

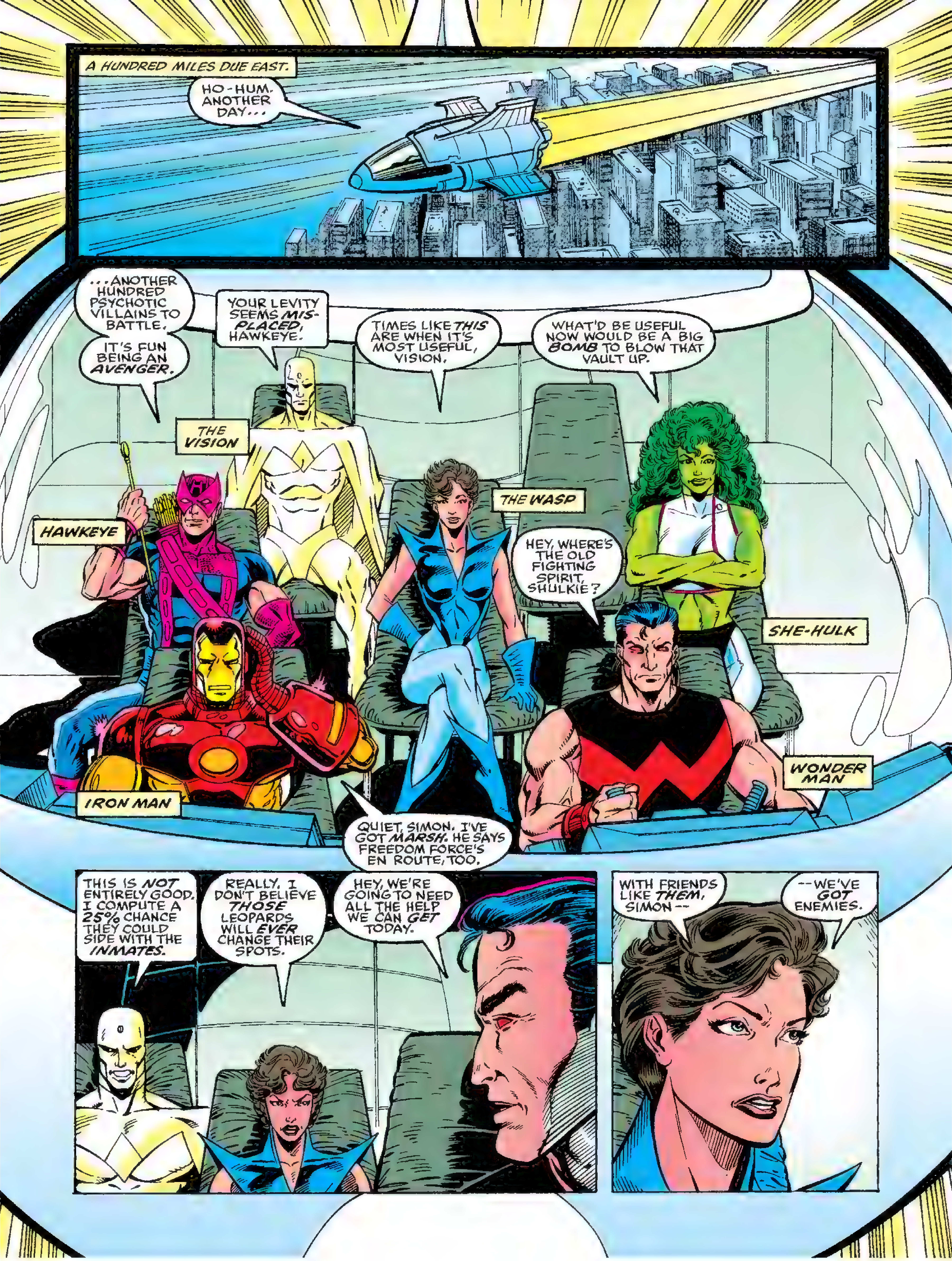

"...THINGS WILL BE TAKEN *CARE* OF,"
COME ON OUT--
--*GORILLA MAN*--!
THAT'S "*DR. NAGAN*," THANK YOU.
--AND *FRENZY!*
THANKS, *ELECTRO!* LET'S *BUST UP* THIS JOINT!
UH-OH, THE JOINT AIN'T BUSTIN' UP SO EASY!
FWOOM
TITANIUM FOAM SEALING OFF VENTS--!
GAS!
SMELLS LIKE C_2O_6!
VAPOR-- TURN TO GASEOUS *CESIUM*. CIRCULATE AROUND-- *NEUTRALIZE* THAT STUFF.
ON MY WAY, *THUNDERBALL.*
HURRY!

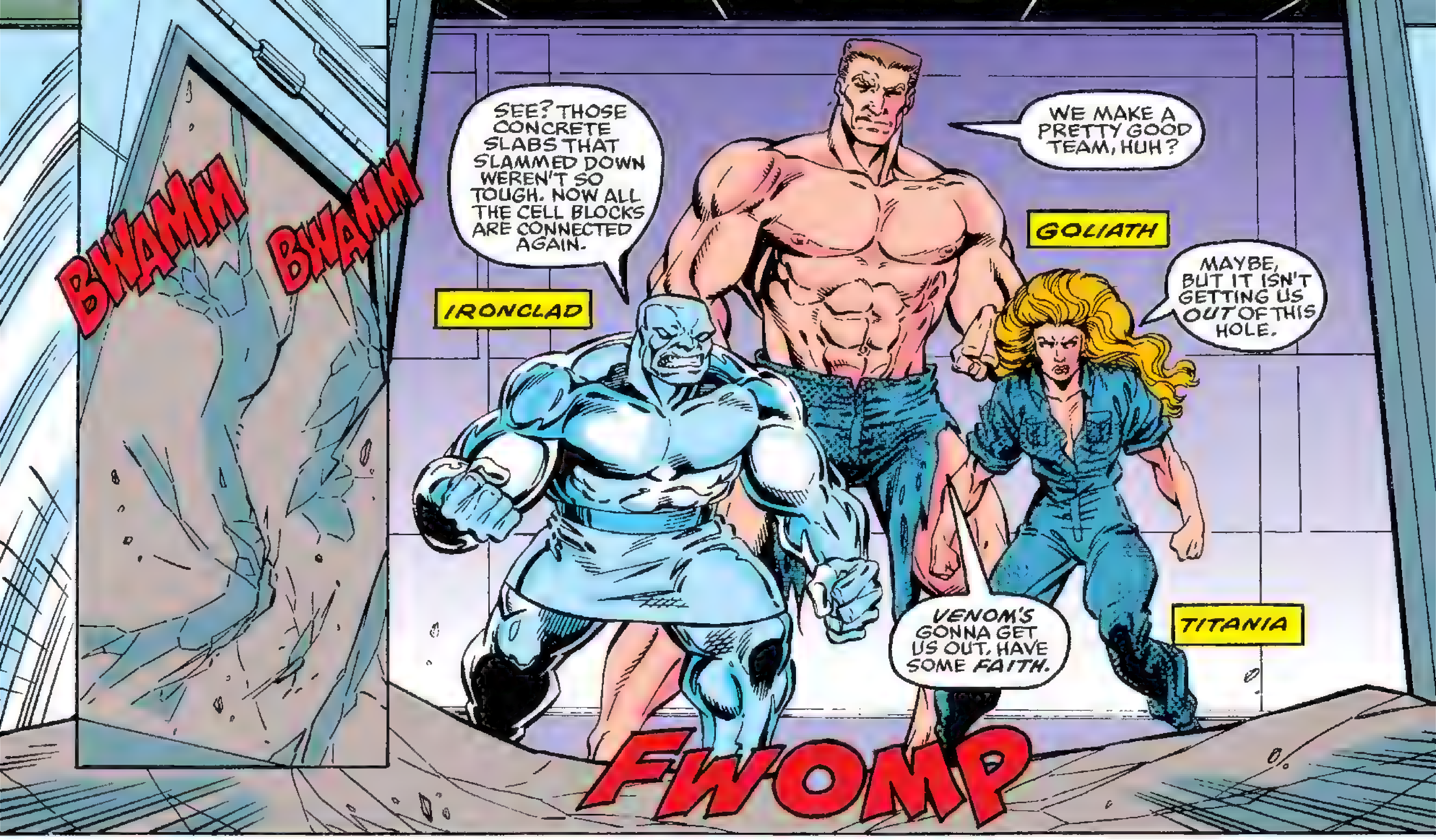

THAT VENT-- IT'S *HALF A MILE* FROM HERE!
THE *GRIFFIN, ORKA*, AND *BULLET* MUST'VE GOTTEN OUT JUST AS THE BREAK BEGAN!
I VOWED NO ONE WOULD ESCAPE-- *EVER.*
THIS BUTTON WILL *ENSURE* THAT. IF I HAVE--
--THE NERVE...
KLONG
I SLOWED 'EM DOWN, HANK--
NOW LET'S SEE WHAT A *FORCE BLAST* DOES!
AAAGH--!
BWANGG
SORRY, BULLET! YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GO BACK UNDER!
NO!!

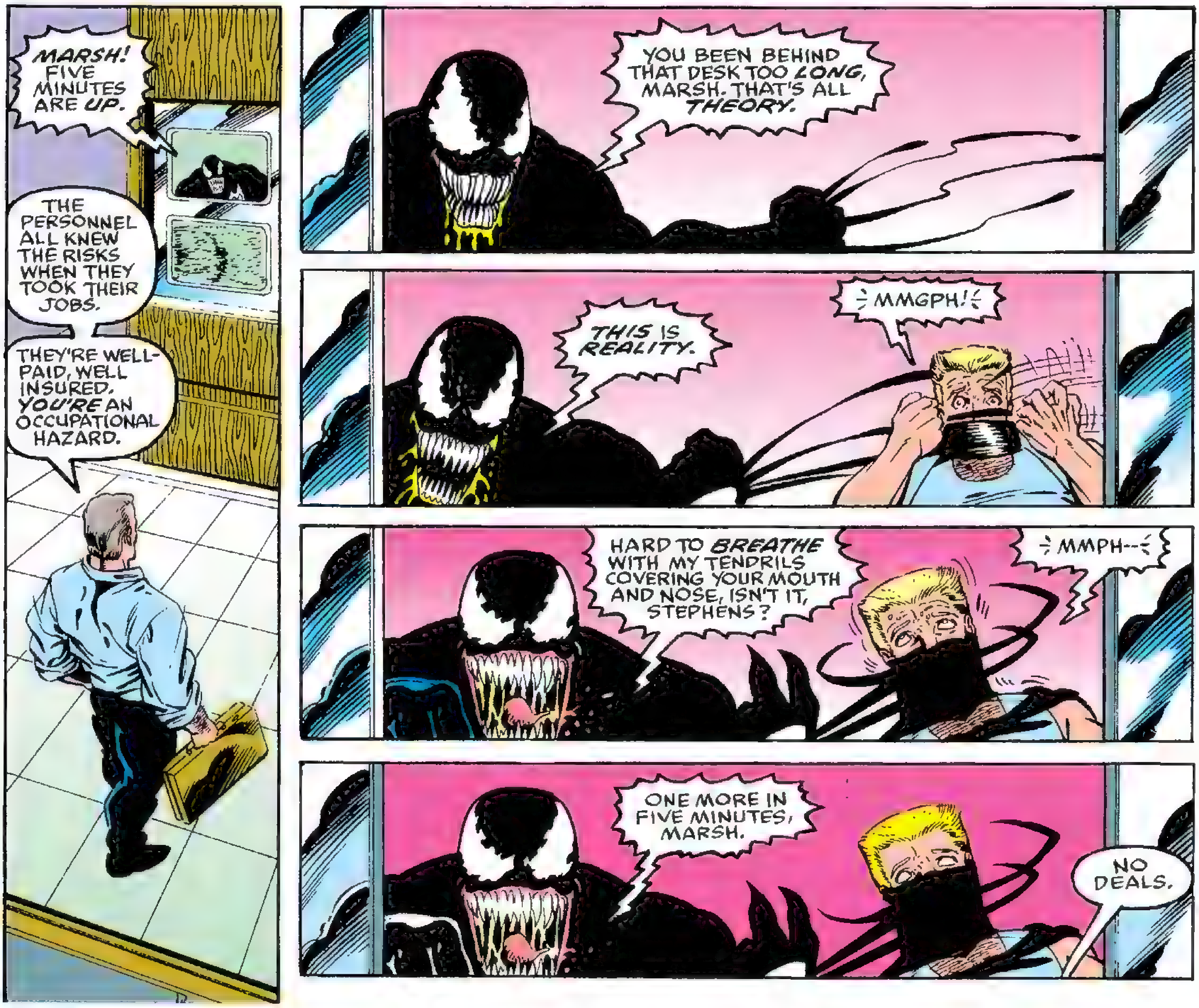

GOT YOU, LITTLE MAN.
ORKA--
--YOU OUGHT TO KNOW BETTER THAN TO GRAB A GUY WHO CAN SHRINK *ANY-THING* WITH A *TOUCH!*
AAAAA--! GET *AWAY!*
SURE THING--!
MAKES IT EASIER FOR ME TO ENLARGE THIS *GLORIFIED HAIR-DRYER* THAT--
OH, YOU GET THE *IDEA*, I'M SURE.
UNNNNNH...
FWOMMMG
UHHHH--
TWO DOWN-- BUT GRIFFIN'S *ESCAPING!*
NOT IF MY CRACKLIN' *LASSO* WORKS THE WAY I *DESIGNED* IT TO--!
GOTCHA!
GUESS THAT ALARM WE INTERCEPTED ON THE WAY HOME *WASN'T* FALSE.
SCANNERS SHOW THAT WAS THE *ONLY* EXIT COMPROMISED.
WE'RE ALL LUCKY, FOR THE MOMENT.
OPERATIONAL
BUT I'D BETTER ASCERTAIN THAT MY PRIVATE *ESCAPE ROUTE* IS FUNCTIONAL...
YES. IT CHECKS OUT *PERFECTLY.*

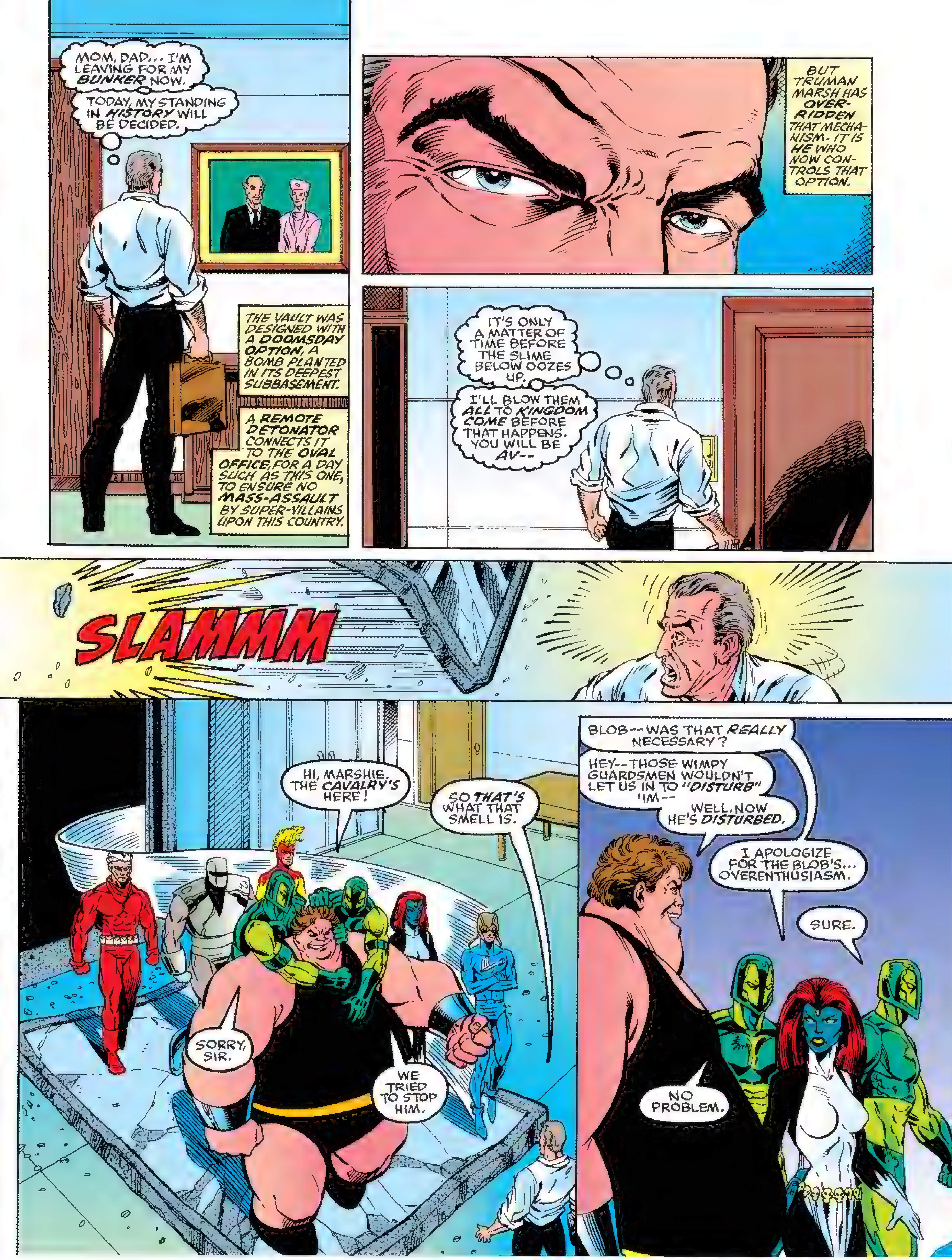

THE COLORADO SKIES, TEN MILES DUE EAST.
...SO THERE'S A TON O' CUT-THROAT VILLAINS LOOSE IN THERE...
...ALL ITCHIN' TO GET OUT AND BREAK HEADS...
...MOST OF 'EM OVER-RIDIN' THE DAMPERS THE FEDS PUT ON 'EM...
...AND ALL US FREEDOM FORCE FOLKS GOTTA DO...
...IS WALTZ IN AND MAKE 'EM GO BACK TO THEIR CELLS?
BLOB
THAT BLOODY WELL SAYS IT, BLOB, OLD BOY.
PYRO
NOTHIN' WE CAN'T HANDLE.
CRIMSON COMMANDO
MYSTIQUE
THIS LIST OF INMATES IS PRETTY SCARY, BOSS.
AVALANCHE
SUPER SABRE
DON'T WORRY, AVALANCHE. FOLLOW ORDERS --AND YOU'LL BE FINE.
PRETTY FUNNY, HUH? ONCE UPON A TIME, WHEN WE WERE VILLAINS, WE WOULD'A BEEN DOWN THERE.
I ACTUALLY FEEL SORRY FOR THOSE POOR SLOBS TRYIN' TO BREAK OUT.
DON'T.
THIS IS THE ENEMY! DON'T FORGET IT!
EVER.
≷GLLK≶ S-SURE, MYSTIQUE. I WAS ONLY THINKIN' OUT LOUD.
BECOME YOURSELF. GIVES ME THE CREEPS WHEN YOU SHAPE-CHANGE.
SURE.
BUT THE BLOB ECHOES WHAT WE ALL FEEL. WE WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT NOW...
...IN RETURN FOR AMNESTY...
...BUT OUR LOYALTIES WILL BE SORELY TESTED DOWN THERE.

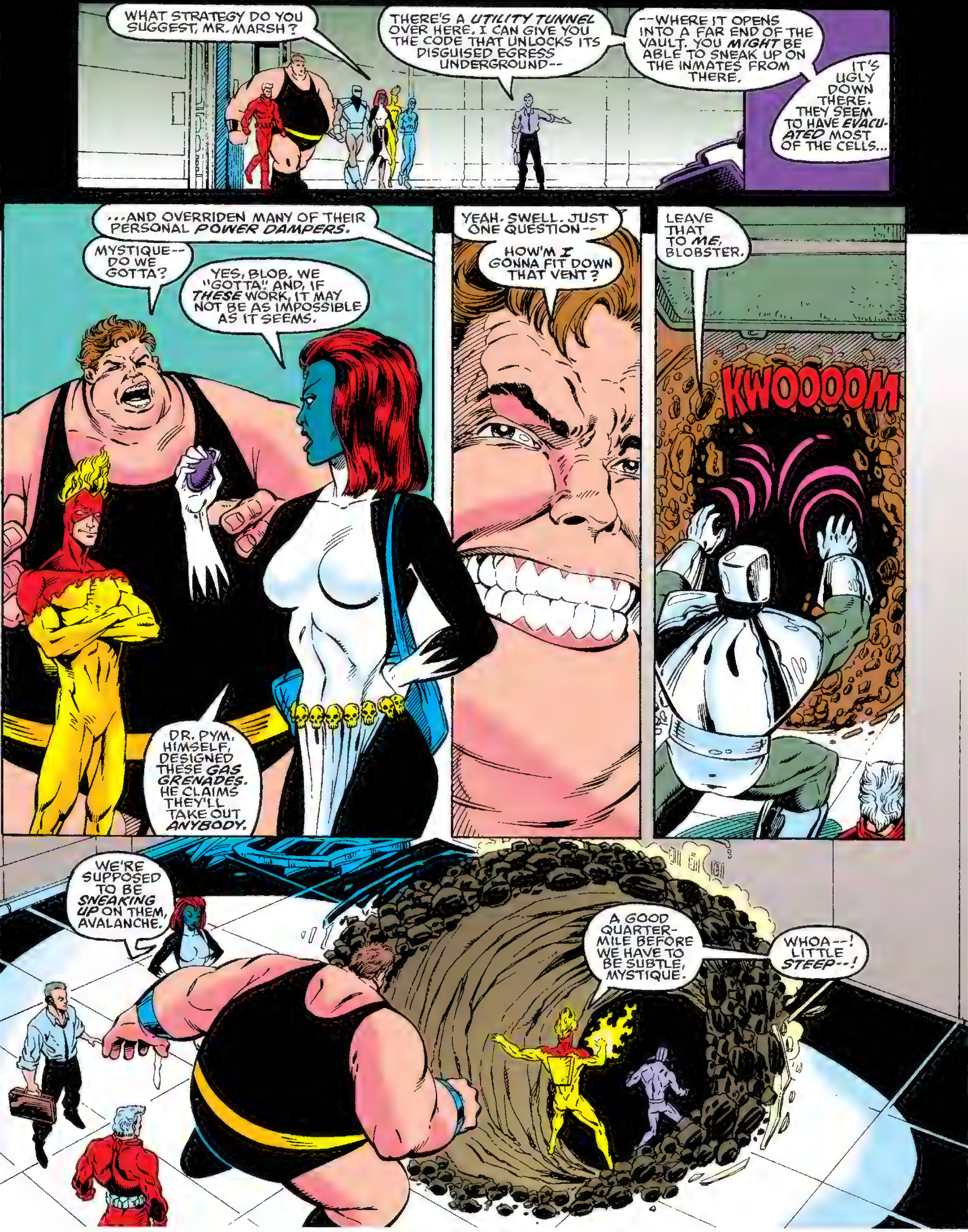

THE MORE I THINK ABOUT IT, THE MORE I'M CONVINCED IT'D BE BEST IF I OVERSAW THE *REST* OF THIS CRISIS...
...FROM A SAFER *DISTANCE*.
MARSH--!
VENOM--ON A CAPTURED *COMMUNICATOR*--!
WE'VE NEUTRALIZED THE *GAS*, TRU. AND NOW WE'VE GOT *HOSTAGES-- LOTS* OF 'EM. ALL THE GUARDSMEN AND ANYONE ELSE DUMB ENOUGH TO BE IN OUR REACH.
AND ONE OF 'EM'S GOING TO *DIE* EVERY *FIVE MINUTES--*
--UNLESS YOU SET US *FREE!*
NO NEGOTIATIONS. NO DEALS.
YOU'RE NOT LEAVING.
I'VE GOT MY PORTABLE OPERATIONS CENTER HERE. IT'S ALL I'LL NEED--
--TO DO WHAT I'LL *HAVE* TO DO.

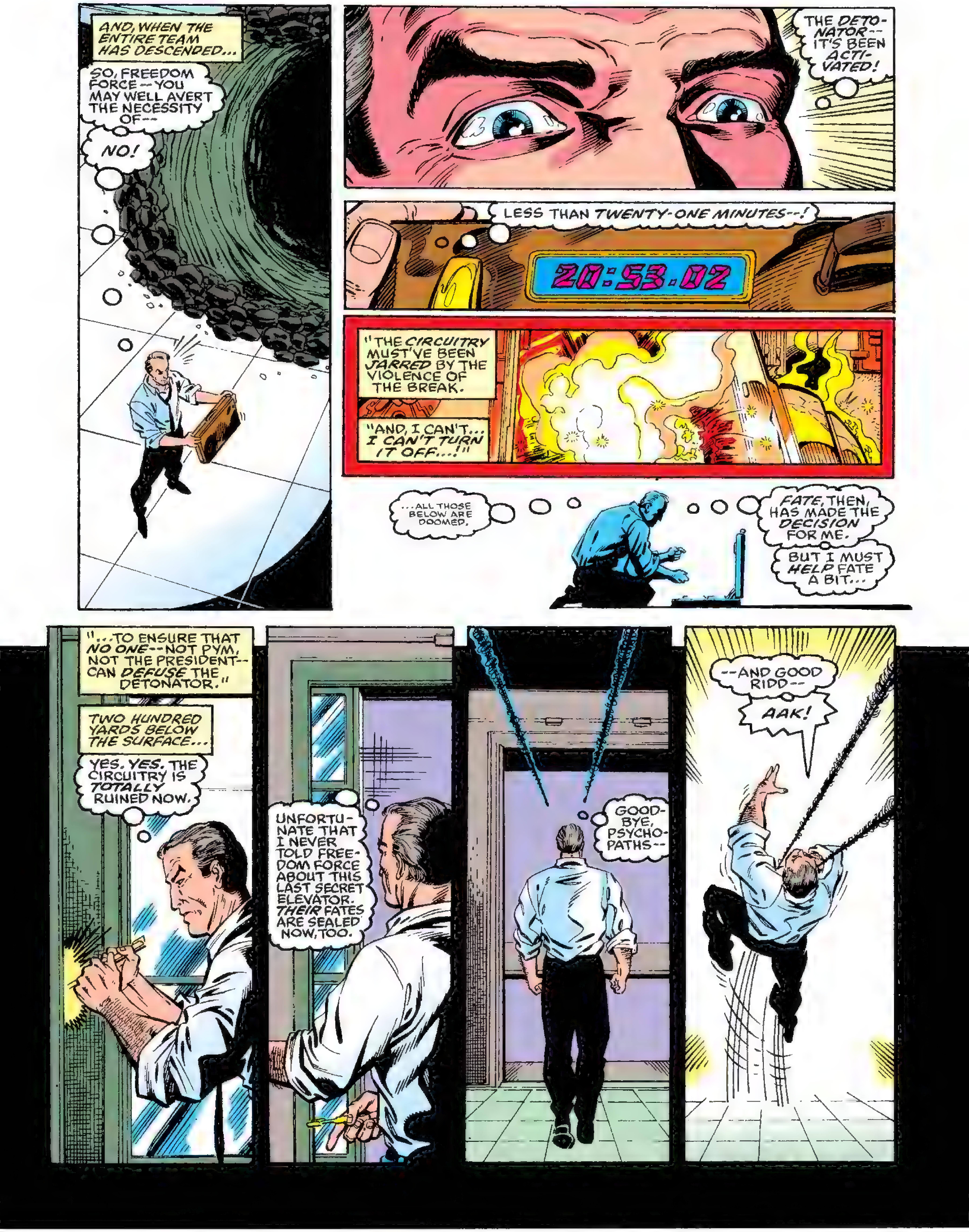

A HUNDRED MILES DUE EAST.
HO-HUM. ANOTHER DAY...
...ANOTHER HUNDRED PSYCHOTIC VILLAINS TO BATTLE.
IT'S FUN BEING AN *AVENGER*.
YOUR LEVITY SEEMS *MISPLACED*, HAWKEYE.
TIMES LIKE *THIS* ARE WHEN IT'S MOST USEFUL, VISION.
WHAT'D BE USEFUL NOW WOULD BE A BIG *BOMB* TO BLOW THAT VAULT UP.
THE VISION
THE WASP
HAWKEYE
HEY, WHERE'S THE OLD FIGHTING SPIRIT, SHULKIE?
SHE-HULK
WONDER MAN
IRON MAN
QUIET, SIMON. I'VE GOT *MARSH*. HE SAYS FREEDOM FORCE'S EN ROUTE, TOO.
THIS IS *NOT* ENTIRELY GOOD. I COMPUTE A *25%* CHANCE THEY COULD SIDE WITH THE *INMATES*.
REALLY. I DON'T BELIEVE *THOSE* LEOPARDS WILL *EVER* CHANGE THEIR SPOTS.
HEY, WE'RE GOING TO NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN *GET* TODAY.
WITH FRIENDS LIKE *THEM*, SIMON --
--WE'VE *GOT* ENEMIES.

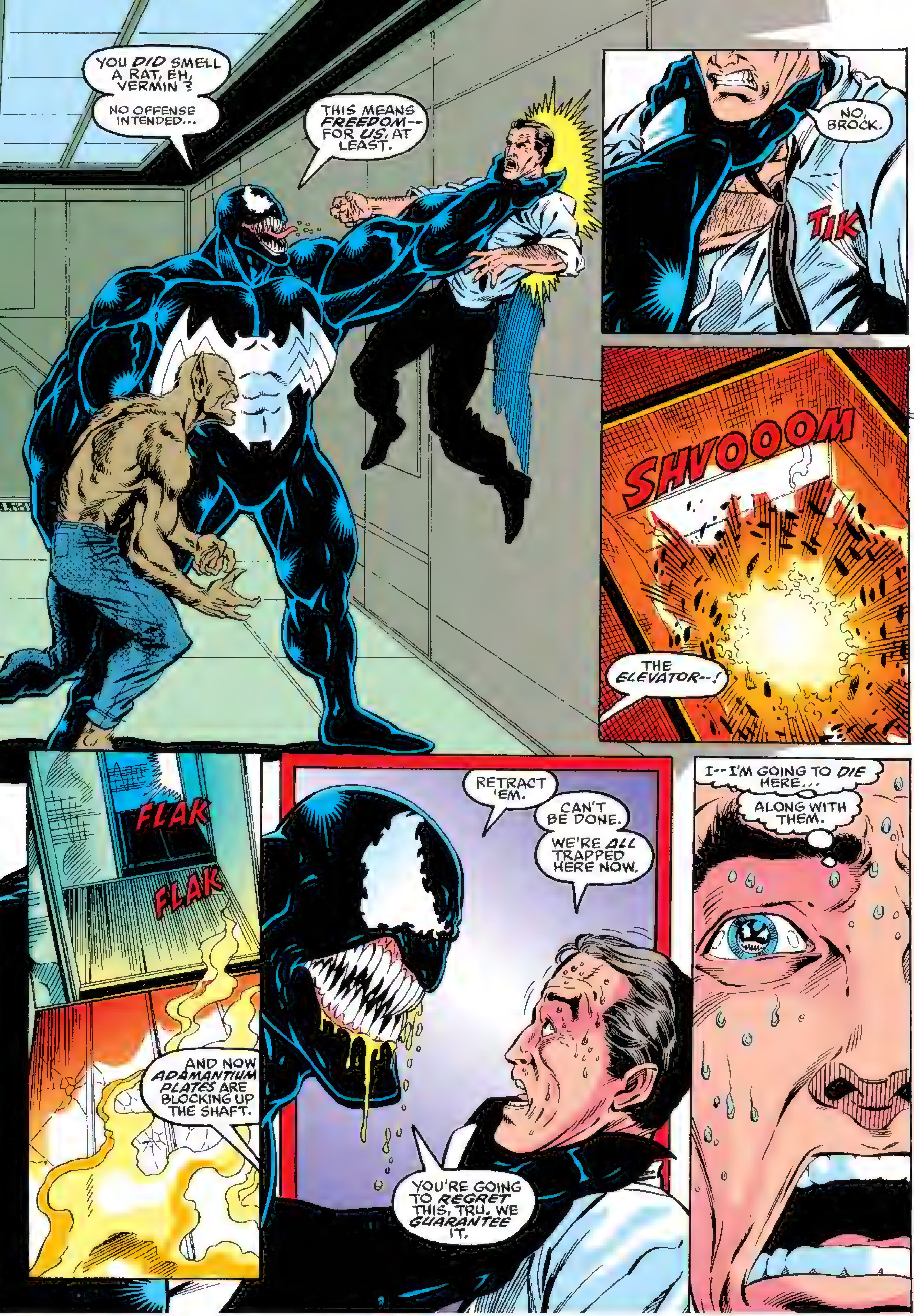

BWAMM
BWAMM
IRONCLAD
SEE? THOSE CONCRETE SLABS THAT SLAMMED DOWN WEREN'T SO TOUGH. NOW ALL THE CELL BLOCKS ARE CONNECTED AGAIN.
GOLIATH
WE MAKE A PRETTY GOOD TEAM, HUH?
TITANIA
MAYBE, BUT IT ISN'T GETTING US *OUT* OF THIS HOLE.
VENOM'S GONNA GET US OUT. HAVE SOME *FAITH*.
FWOMP

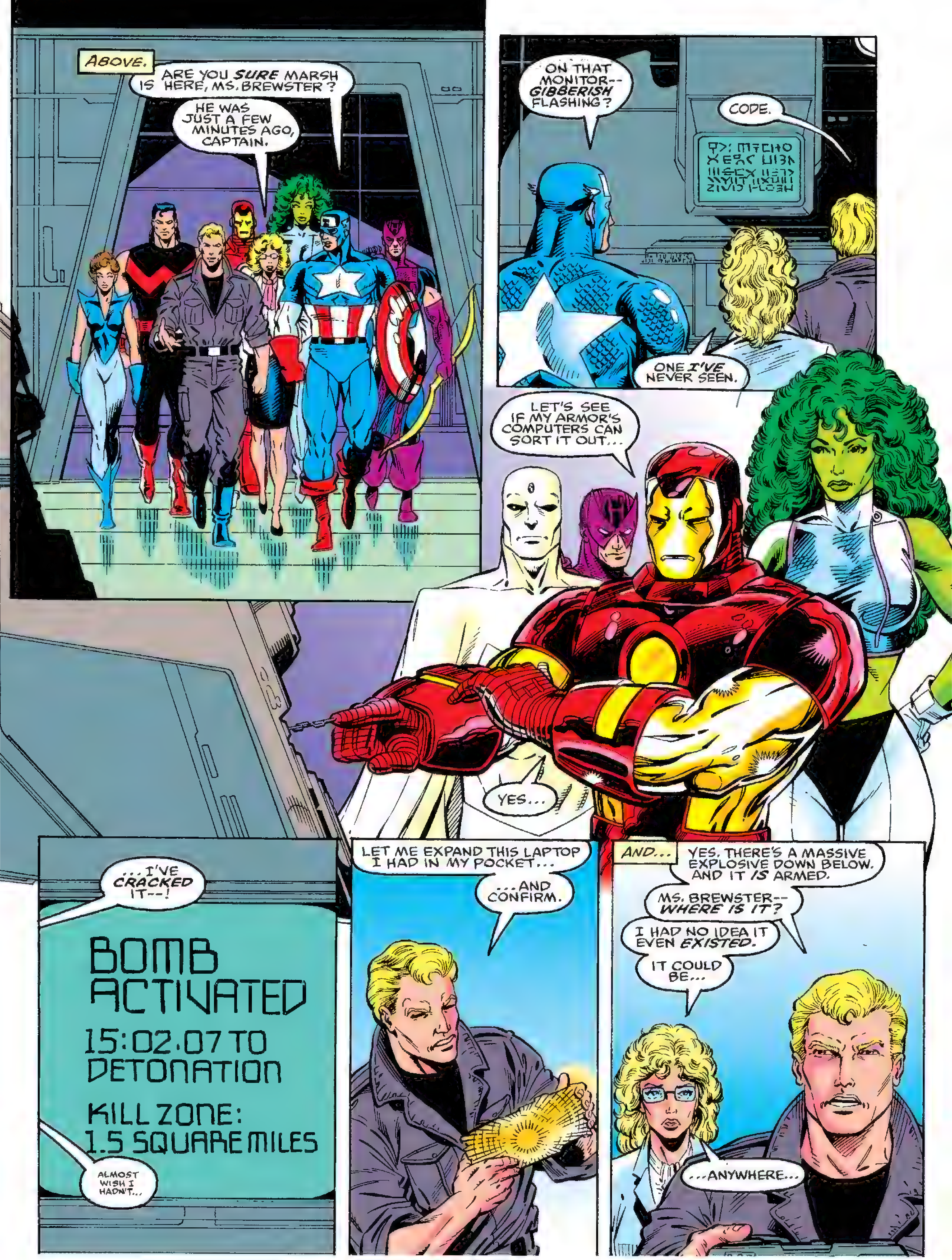

MARSH! FIVE MINUTES ARE *UP*.
THE PERSONNEL ALL KNEW THE RISKS WHEN THEY TOOK THEIR JOBS.
THEY'RE WELL-PAID, WELL INSURED. *YOU'RE* AN OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD.
YOU BEEN BEHIND THAT DESK TOO *LONG*, MARSH. THAT'S ALL *THEORY*.
THIS IS *REALITY*.
MMGPH!
HARD TO *BREATHE* WITH MY TENDRILS COVERING YOUR MOUTH AND NOSE, ISN'T IT, STEPHENS?
MMPH--
ONE MORE IN FIVE MINUTES, MARSH.
NO DEALS.

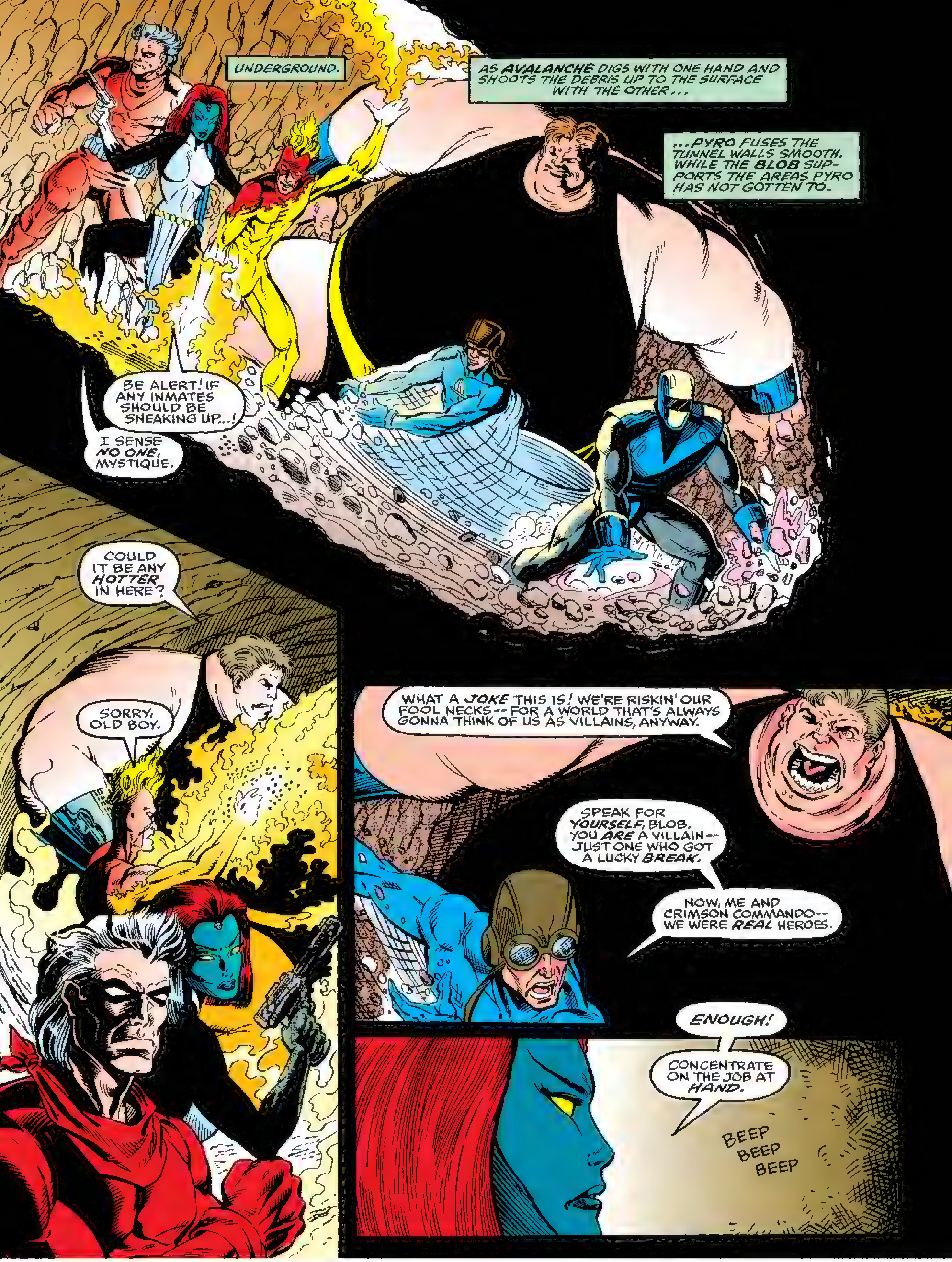

MOM, DAD... I'M LEAVING FOR MY *BUNKER* NOW.
TODAY, MY STANDING IN *HISTORY* WILL BE DECIDED.
*THE VAULT WAS DESIGNED WITH A **DOOMSDAY OPTION**, A BOMB PLANTED IN ITS DEEPEST SUBBASEMENT.*
*A **REMOTE DETONATOR** CONNECTS IT TO THE **OVAL OFFICE**, FOR A DAY SUCH AS THIS ONE, TO ENSURE NO **MASS-ASSAULT** BY SUPER-VILLAINS UPON THIS COUNTRY.*
*BUT TRUMAN MARSH HAS **OVER-RIDDEN** THAT MECHANISM. IT IS **HE** WHO NOW CONTROLS THAT OPTION.*
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE SLIME BELOW OOZES UP.
I'LL BLOW THEM *ALL* TO *KINGDOM COME* BEFORE THAT HAPPENS. YOU WILL BE *AV--*
SLAMMM
HI, MARSHIE. THE *CAVALRY'S* HERE!
SO *THAT'S* WHAT THAT SMELL IS.
SORRY, SIR.
WE TRIED TO STOP HIM.
BLOB--WAS THAT *REALLY* NECESSARY?
HEY--THOSE WIMPY GUARDSMEN WOULDN'T LET US IN TO *"DISTURB"* 'IM--
WELL, NOW HE'S *DISTURBED*.
I APOLOGIZE FOR THE BLOB'S... OVERENTHUSIASM.
SURE.
NO PROBLEM.

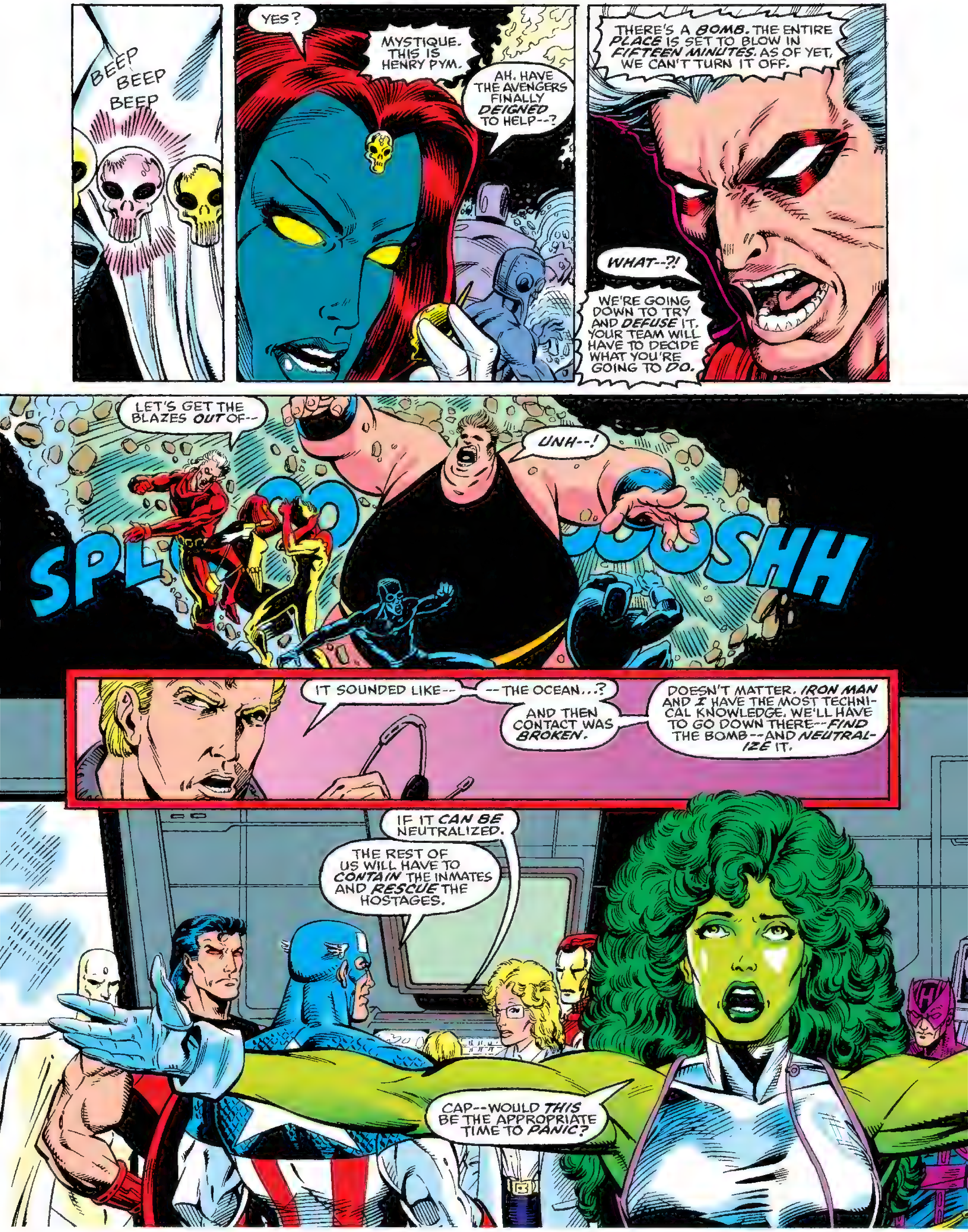

WHAT STRATEGY DO YOU SUGGEST, MR. MARSH?
THERE'S A UTILITY TUNNEL OVER HERE. I CAN GIVE YOU THE CODE THAT UNLOCKS ITS DISGUISED EGRESS UNDERGROUND--
--WHERE IT OPENS INTO A FAR END OF THE VAULT. YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO SNEAK UP ON THE INMATES FROM THERE.
IT'S UGLY DOWN THERE. THEY SEEM TO HAVE EVACUATED MOST OF THE CELLS...
...AND OVERRIDEN MANY OF THEIR PERSONAL POWER DAMPERS.
MYSTIQUE-- DO WE GOTTA?
YES, BLOB. WE "GOTTA." AND, IF THESE WORK, IT MAY NOT BE AS IMPOSSIBLE AS IT SEEMS.
DR. PYM, HIMSELF, DESIGNED THESE GAS GRENADES. HE CLAIMS THEY'LL TAKE OUT ANYBODY.
YEAH. SWELL. JUST ONE QUESTION--
HOW'M I GONNA FIT DOWN THAT VENT?
LEAVE THAT TO ME, BLOBSTER.
KWOOOOM
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE SNEAKING UP ON THEM, AVALANCHE.
A GOOD QUARTER-MILE BEFORE WE HAVE TO BE SUBTLE, MYSTIQUE.
WHOA--! LITTLE STEEP--!

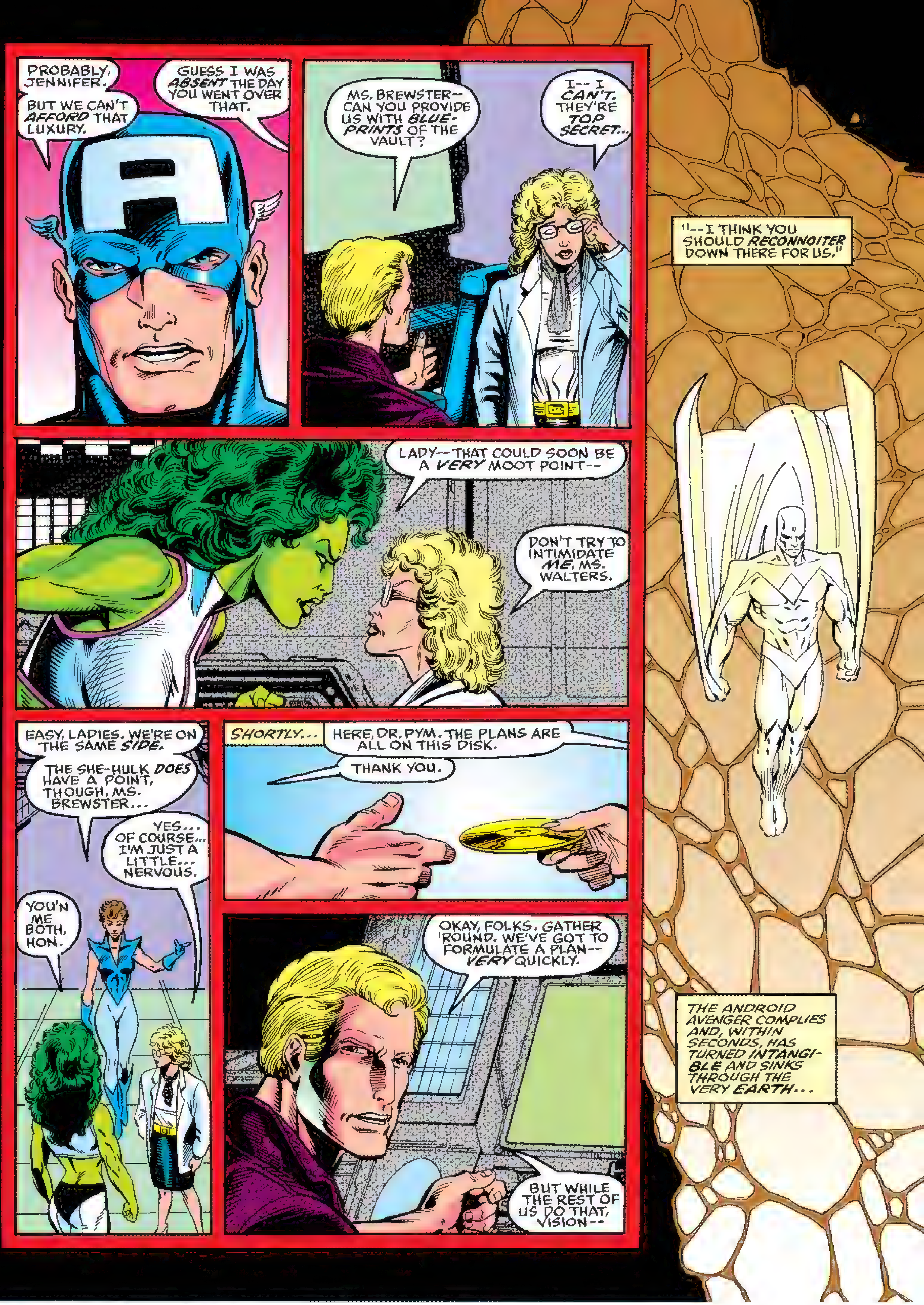

AND, WHEN THE ENTIRE TEAM HAS DESCENDED...
SO, FREEDOM FORCE -- YOU MAY WELL AVERT THE NECESSITY OF--
NO!
THE DETONATOR-- IT'S BEEN ACTIVATED!
LESS THAN TWENTY-ONE MINUTES--!
20:53.02
"THE CIRCUITRY MUST'VE BEEN JARRED BY THE VIOLENCE OF THE BREAK.
"AND, I CAN'T... I CAN'T TURN IT OFF...!"
...ALL THOSE BELOW ARE DOOMED.
FATE, THEN, HAS MADE THE DECISION FOR ME.
BUT I MUST HELP FATE A BIT...
"...TO ENSURE THAT NO ONE--NOT PYM, NOT THE PRESIDENT--CAN DEFUSE THE DETONATOR."
TWO HUNDRED YARDS BELOW THE SURFACE...
YES. YES. THE CIRCUITRY IS TOTALLY RUINED NOW.
UNFORTUNATE THAT I NEVER TOLD FREEDOM FORCE ABOUT THIS LAST SECRET ELEVATOR. THEIR FATES ARE SEALED NOW, TOO.
GOOD-BYE, PSYCHOPATHS--
--AND GOOD RIDD--
AAK!

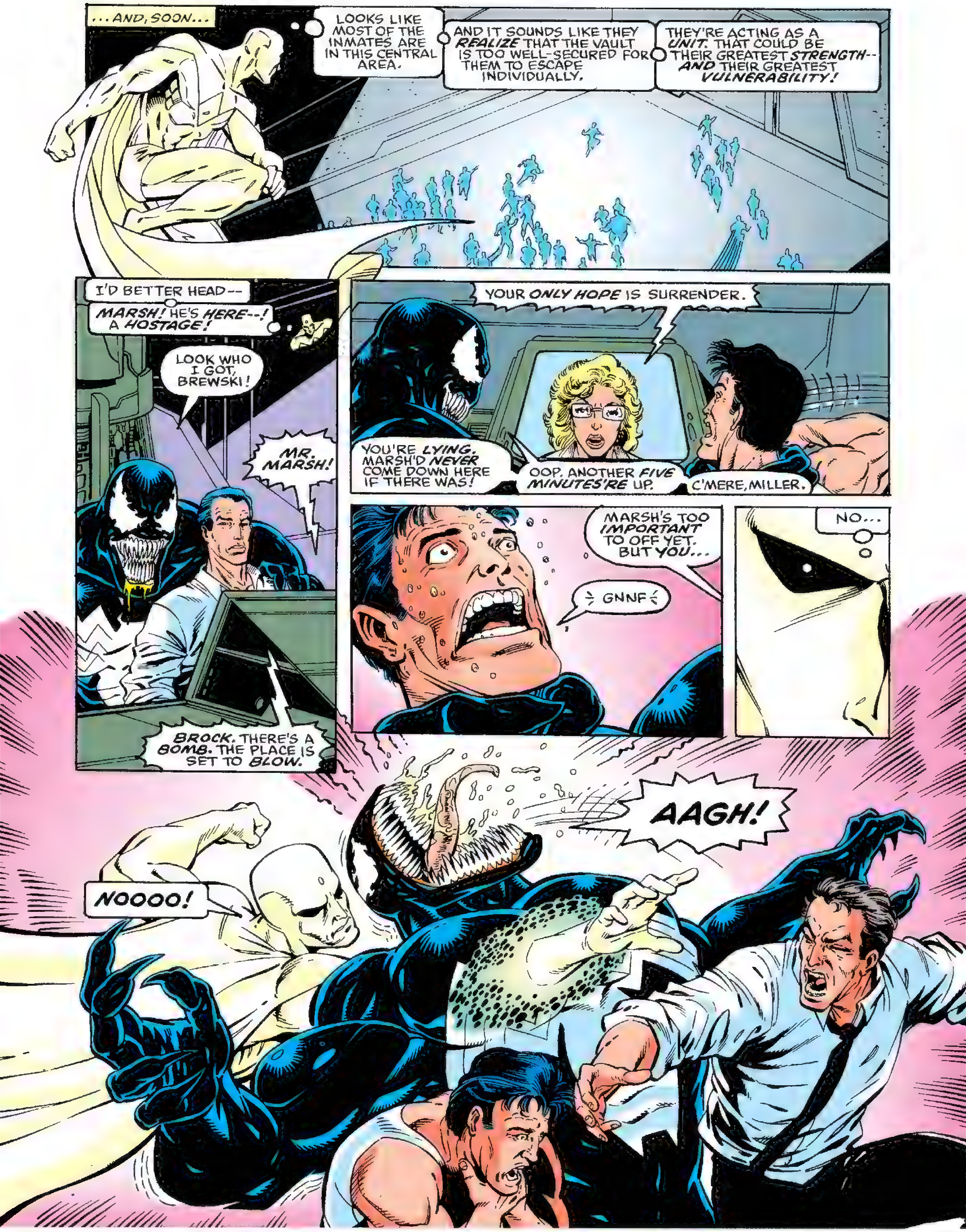

YOU *DID* SMELL A RAT, EH, VERMIN?
NO OFFENSE INTENDED...
THIS MEANS *FREEDOM*--FOR *US*, AT LEAST.
NO, BROCK.
TIK
SHVOOOM
THE *ELEVATOR*--!
FLAK
FLAK
AND NOW *ADAMANTIUM PLATES* ARE BLOCKING UP THE SHAFT.
RETRACT 'EM.
CAN'T BE DONE.
WE'RE *ALL* TRAPPED HERE NOW.
YOU'RE GOING TO *REGRET* THIS, TRU. WE *GUARANTEE* IT.
I--I'M GOING TO *DIE* HERE...
ALONG WITH THEM.

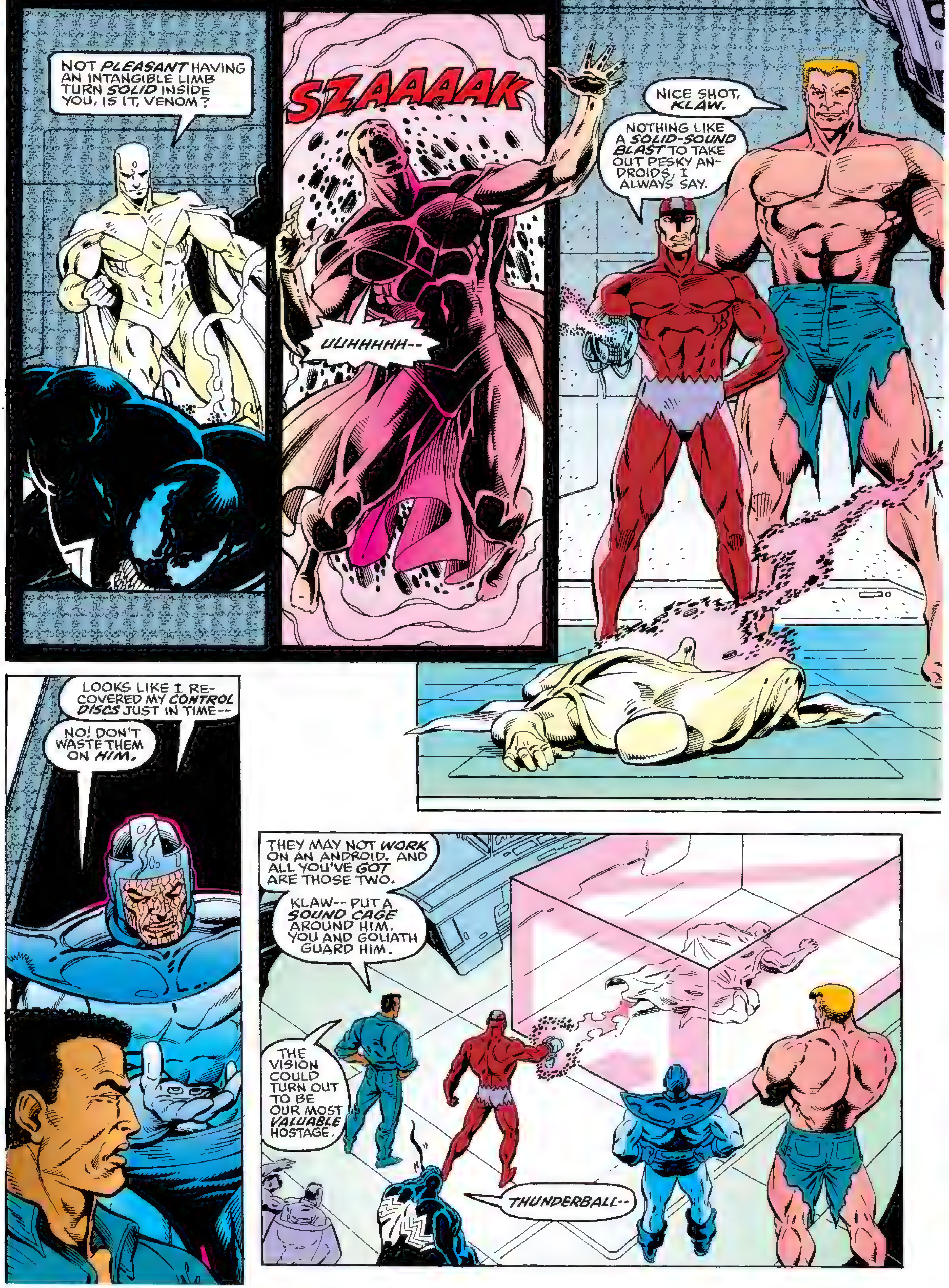

ABOVE.
ARE YOU *SURE* MARSH IS HERE, MS. BREWSTER?
HE WAS JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO, CAPTAIN.
ON THAT MONITOR-- *GIBBERISH* FLASHING?
CODE.
ONE *I'VE* NEVER SEEN.
LET'S SEE IF MY ARMOR'S COMPUTERS CAN SORT IT OUT...
YES...
...I'VE *CRACKED* IT--!
BOMB ACTIVATED
15:02.07 TO DETONATION
KILL ZONE: 1.5 SQUARE MILES
ALMOST WISH I HADN'T...
LET ME EXPAND THIS LAPTOP I HAD IN MY POCKET...
...AND CONFIRM.
AND...
YES, THERE'S A MASSIVE EXPLOSIVE DOWN BELOW. AND IT *IS* ARMED.
MS. BREWSTER-- *WHERE IS IT?*
I HAD NO IDEA IT EVEN *EXISTED.*
IT COULD BE...
...ANYWHERE...

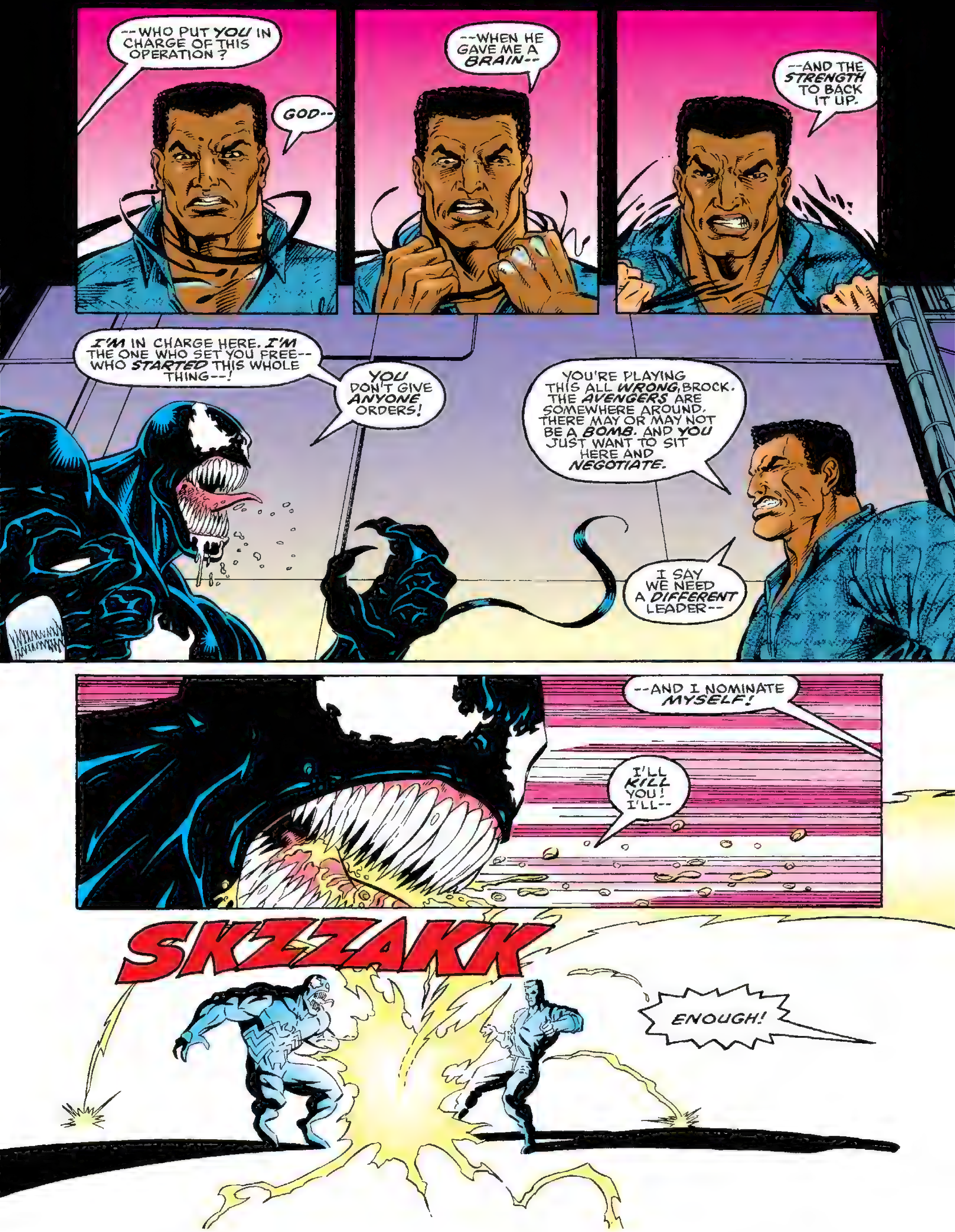

UNDERGROUND.
AS AVALANCHE DIGS WITH ONE HAND AND SHOOTS THE DEBRIS UP TO THE SURFACE WITH THE OTHER...
...PYRO FUSES THE TUNNEL WALLS SMOOTH, WHILE THE BLOB SUPPORTS THE AREAS PYRO HAS NOT GOTTEN TO.
BE ALERT! IF ANY INMATES SHOULD BE SNEAKING UP...!
I SENSE NO ONE, MYSTIQUE.
COULD IT BE ANY HOTTER IN HERE?
SORRY, OLD BOY.
WHAT A JOKE THIS IS! WE'RE RISKIN' OUR FOOL NECKS--FOR A WORLD THAT'S ALWAYS GONNA THINK OF US AS VILLAINS, ANYWAY.
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, BLOB. YOU ARE A VILLAIN-- JUST ONE WHO GOT A LUCKY BREAK.
NOW, ME AND CRIMSON COMMANDO-- WE WERE REAL HEROES.
ENOUGH!
CONCENTRATE ON THE JOB AT HAND.
BEEP BEEP BEEP

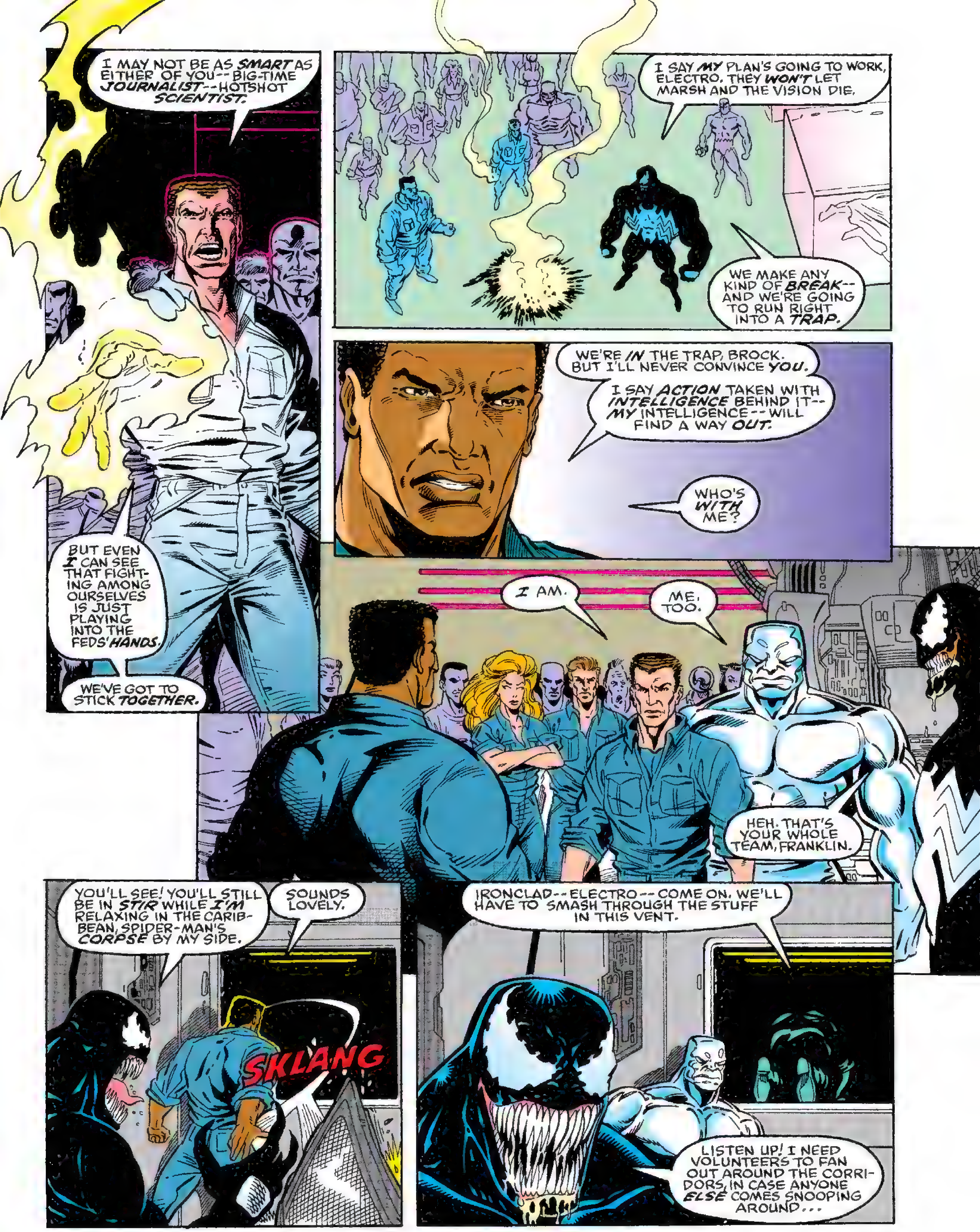

BEEP BEEP BEEP
YES?
MYSTIQUE. THIS IS HENRY PYM.
AH. HAVE THE AVENGERS FINALLY *DEIGNED* TO HELP--?
THERE'S A *BOMB.* THE ENTIRE *PLACE* IS SET TO BLOW IN *FIFTEEN MINUTES.* AS OF YET, WE CAN'T TURN IT OFF.
WHAT--?!
WE'RE GOING DOWN TO TRY AND *DEFUSE* IT. YOUR TEAM WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO *DO.*
LET'S GET THE BLAZES *OUT* OF--
UNH--!
SPLOOOOOSHH
IT SOUNDED LIKE--
--THE OCEAN...?
AND THEN CONTACT WAS *BROKEN.*
DOESN'T MATTER. *IRON MAN* AND *I* HAVE THE MOST TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE. WE'LL HAVE TO GO DOWN THERE--*FIND* THE BOMB--AND *NEUTRALIZE* IT.
IF IT *CAN BE* NEUTRALIZED.
THE REST OF US WILL HAVE TO *CONTAIN* THE INMATES AND *RESCUE* THE HOSTAGES.
CAP--WOULD *THIS* BE THE APPROPRIATE TIME TO *PANIC?*

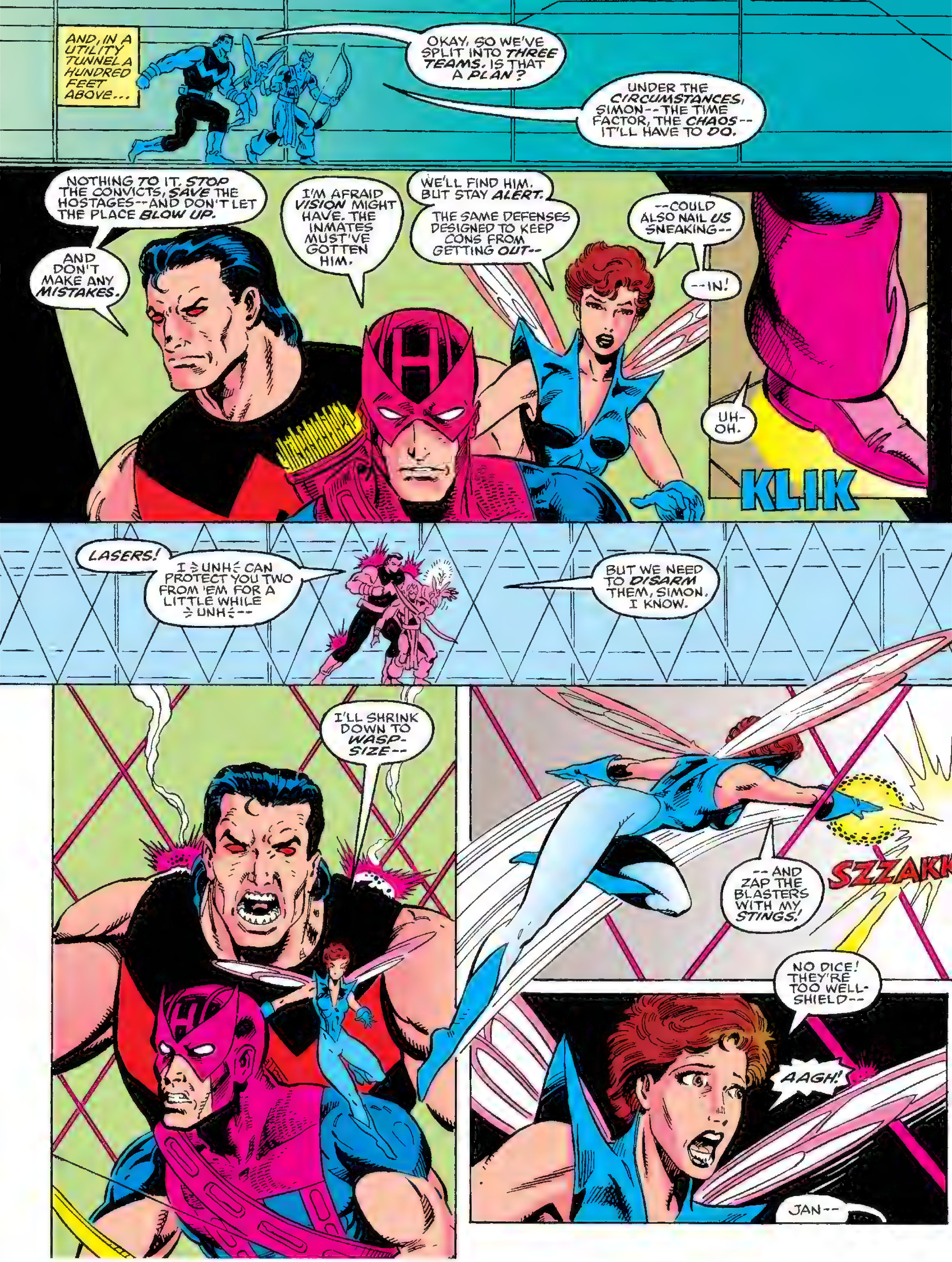

PROBABLY, JENNIFER.
BUT WE CAN'T *AFFORD* THAT LUXURY.
GUESS I WAS *ABSENT* THE DAY YOU WENT OVER THAT.
MS. BREWSTER-- CAN YOU PROVIDE US WITH *BLUE-PRINTS* OF THE VAULT?
I-- I *CAN'T.* THEY'RE *TOP SECRET*...
LADY--THAT COULD SOON BE A *VERY* MOOT POINT--
DON'T TRY TO INTIMIDATE *ME*, MS. WALTERS.
EASY, LADIES. WE'RE ON THE SAME *SIDE.*
THE SHE-HULK *DOES* HAVE A POINT, THOUGH, MS. BREWSTER...
YES... OF COURSE... I'M JUST A LITTLE... NERVOUS.
YOU'N ME BOTH, HON.
SHORTLY...
HERE, DR. PYM. THE PLANS ARE ALL ON THIS DISK.
THANK YOU.
OKAY, FOLKS. GATHER 'ROUND. WE'VE GOT TO FORMULATE A PLAN-- *VERY* QUICKLY.
BUT WHILE THE REST OF US DO THAT, VISION--
"--I THINK YOU SHOULD *RECONNOITER* DOWN THERE FOR US."
THE ANDROID AVENGER COMPLIES AND, WITHIN SECONDS, HAS TURNED ***INTANGIBLE*** *AND SINKS THROUGH THE VERY* ***EARTH...***

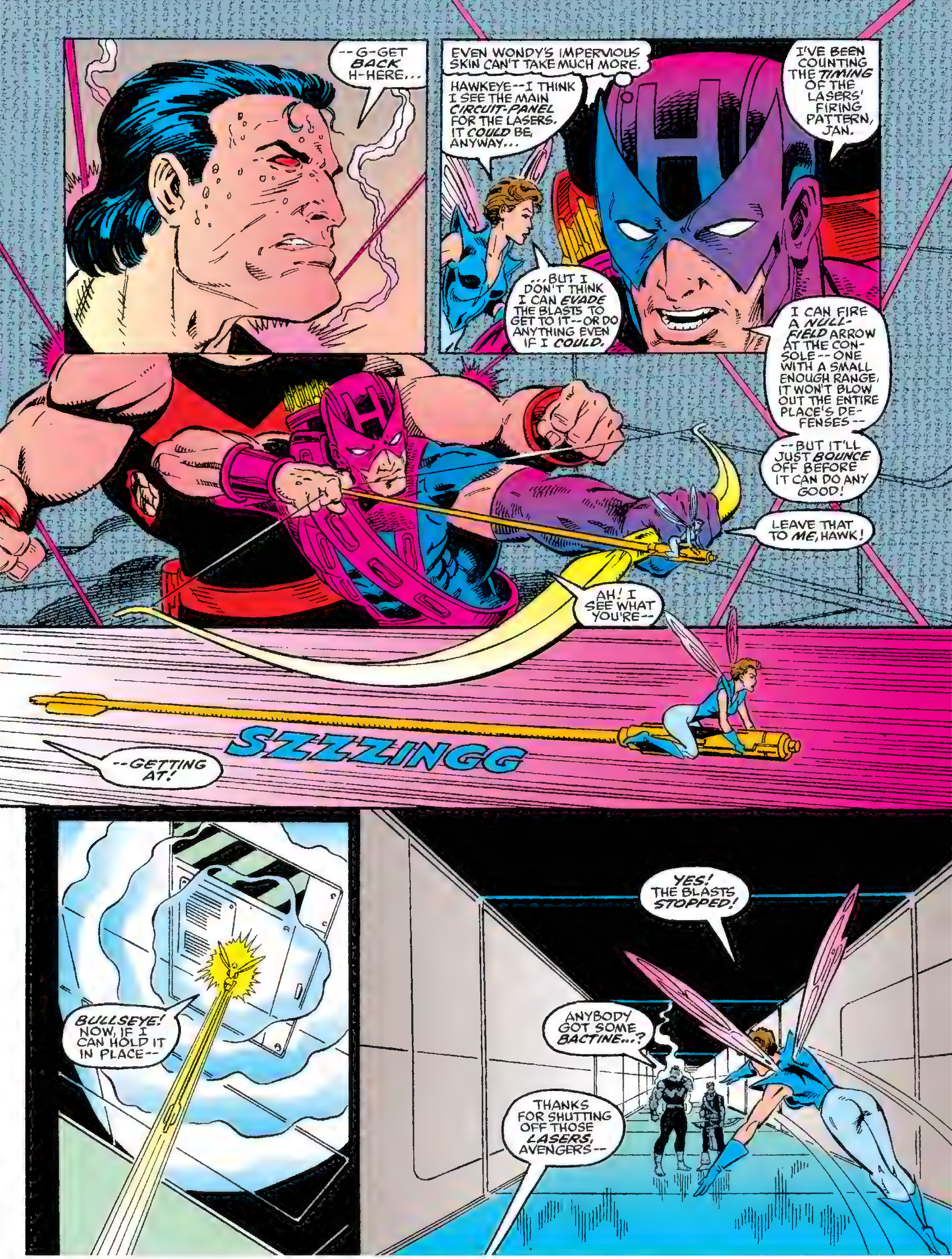

...AND, SOON...
LOOKS LIKE MOST OF THE INMATES ARE IN THIS CENTRAL AREA.
AND IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY *REALIZE* THAT THE VAULT IS TOO WELL-SECURED FOR THEM TO ESCAPE INDIVIDUALLY.
THEY'RE ACTING AS A *UNIT.* THAT COULD BE THEIR GREATEST *STRENGTH*-- *AND* THEIR GREATEST *VULNERABILITY!*
I'D BETTER HEAD--
MARSH! HE'S *HERE*--! A *HOSTAGE!*
LOOK WHO I GOT, BREWSKI!
MR. MARSH!
BROCK. THERE'S A *BOMB.* THE PLACE IS SET TO *BLOW.*
YOUR *ONLY HOPE* IS SURRENDER.
YOU'RE *LYING.* MARSH'D *NEVER* COME DOWN HERE IF THERE WAS!
OOP. ANOTHER *FIVE MINUTES'RE* UP.
C'MERE, MILLER.
MARSH'S TOO *IMPORTANT* TO OFF YET. BUT *YOU...*
GNNF
NO...
AAGH!
NOOOO!

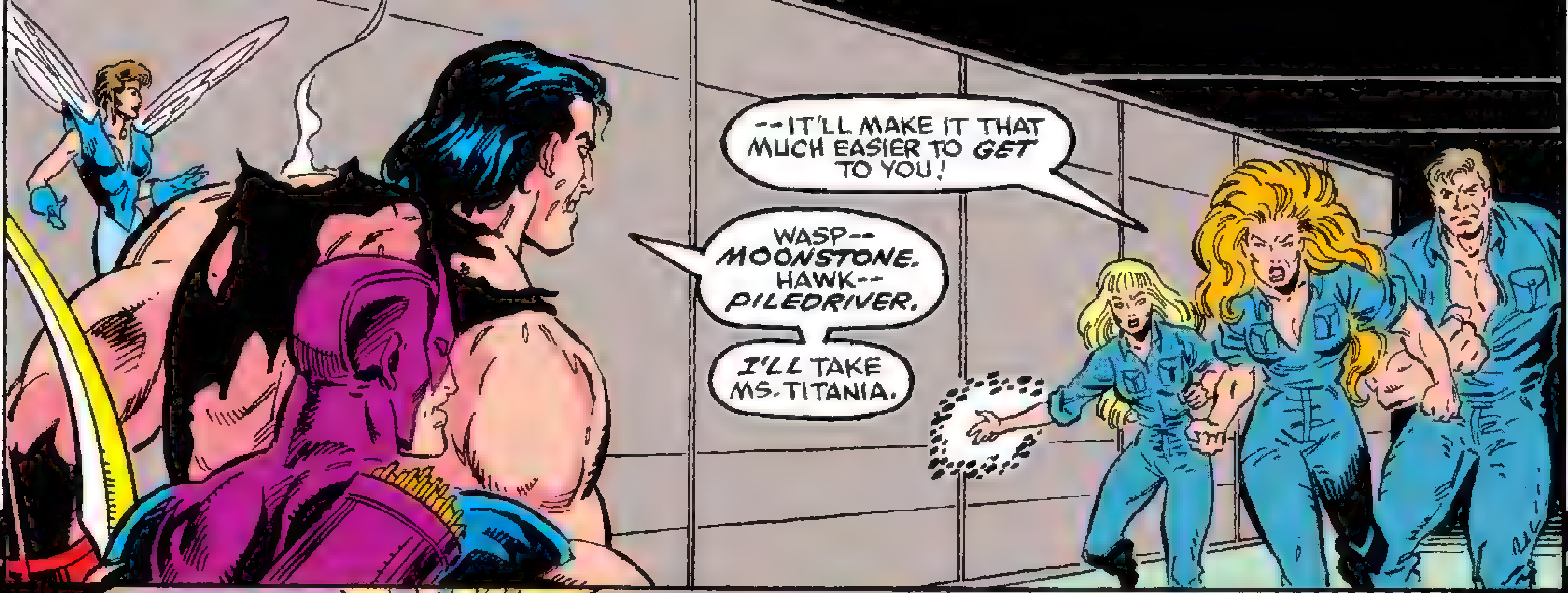

NOT PLEASANT HAVING AN INTANGIBLE LIMB TURN SOLID INSIDE YOU, IS IT, VENOM?
SZAAAAK
UUHHHHH--
NICE SHOT, KLAW.
NOTHING LIKE A SOLID-SOUND BLAST TO TAKE OUT PESKY ANDROIDS, I ALWAYS SAY.
LOOKS LIKE I RECOVERED MY CONTROL DISCS JUST IN TIME--
NO! DON'T WASTE THEM ON HIM.
THEY MAY NOT WORK ON AN ANDROID. AND ALL YOU'VE GOT ARE THOSE TWO.
KLAW-- PUT A SOUND CAGE AROUND HIM. YOU AND GOLIATH GUARD HIM.
THE VISION COULD TURN OUT TO BE OUR MOST VALUABLE HOSTAGE.
THUNDERBALL--

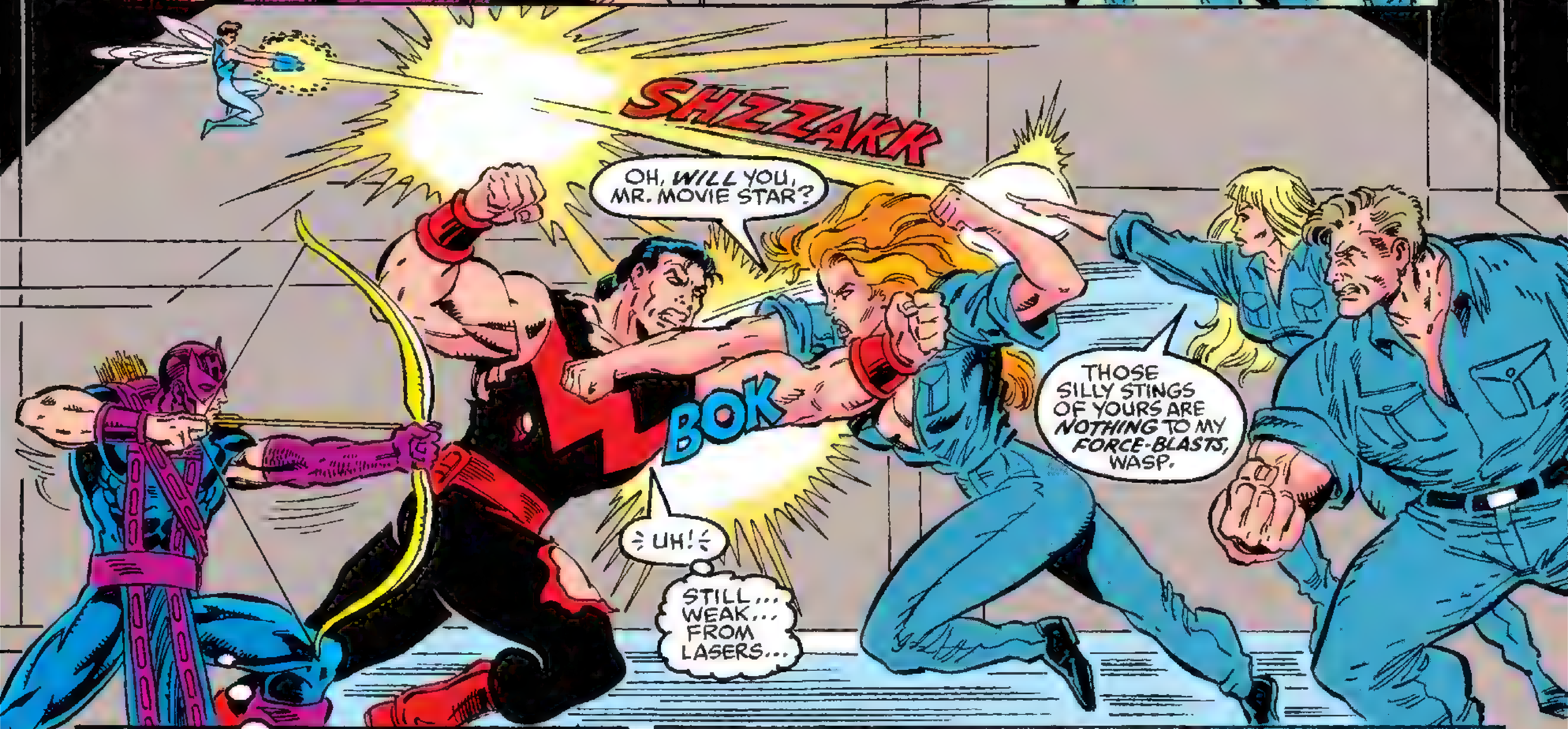

--WHO PUT YOU IN CHARGE OF THIS OPERATION?
GOD--
--WHEN HE GAVE ME A BRAIN--
--AND THE STRENGTH TO BACK IT UP.
I'M IN CHARGE HERE. I'M THE ONE WHO SET YOU FREE-- WHO STARTED THIS WHOLE THING--!
YOU DON'T GIVE ANYONE ORDERS!
YOU'RE PLAYING THIS ALL WRONG, BROCK. THE AVENGERS ARE SOMEWHERE AROUND. THERE MAY OR MAY NOT BE A BOMB. AND YOU JUST WANT TO SIT HERE AND NEGOTIATE.
I SAY WE NEED A DIFFERENT LEADER--
--AND I NOMINATE MYSELF!
I'LL KILL YOU! I'LL--
SKZZAKK
ENOUGH!

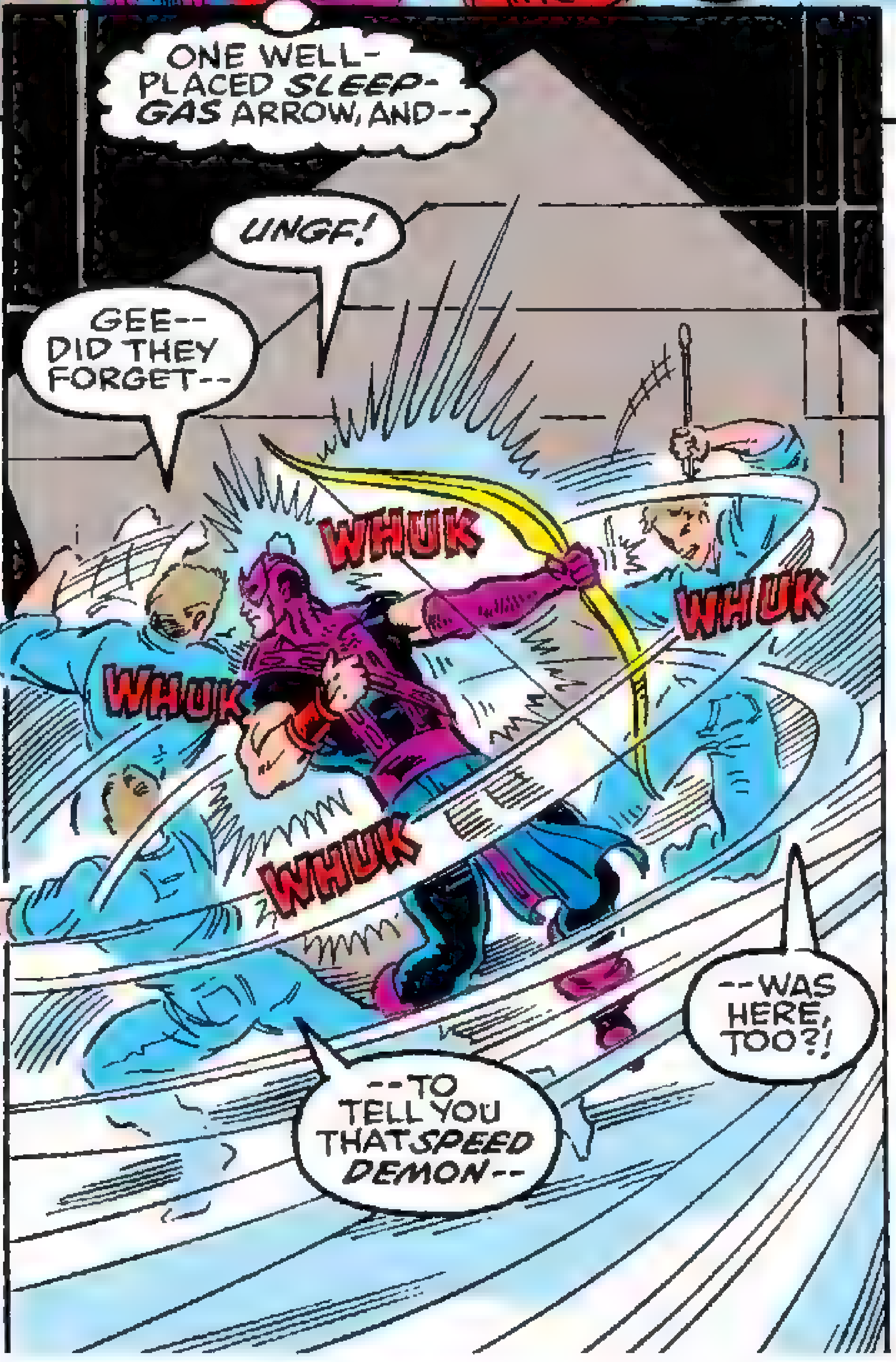

I MAY NOT BE AS SMART AS EITHER OF YOU--BIG-TIME JOURNALIST--HOTSHOT SCIENTIST.
BUT EVEN I CAN SEE THAT FIGHTING AMONG OURSELVES IS JUST PLAYING INTO THE FEDS' HANDS.
WE'VE GOT TO STICK TOGETHER.
I SAY MY PLAN'S GOING TO WORK, ELECTRO. THEY WON'T LET MARSH AND THE VISION DIE.
WE MAKE ANY KIND OF BREAK--AND WE'RE GOING TO RUN RIGHT INTO A TRAP.
WE'RE IN THE TRAP, BROCK. BUT I'LL NEVER CONVINCE YOU.
I SAY ACTION TAKEN WITH INTELLIGENCE BEHIND IT--MY INTELLIGENCE--WILL FIND A WAY OUT.
WHO'S WITH ME?
I AM.
ME, TOO.
HEH. THAT'S YOUR WHOLE TEAM, FRANKLIN.
YOU'LL SEE! YOU'LL STILL BE IN STIR WHILE I'M RELAXING IN THE CARIBBEAN, SPIDER-MAN'S CORPSE BY MY SIDE.
SOUNDS LOVELY.
SKLANG
IRONCLAD--ELECTRO--COME ON. WE'LL HAVE TO SMASH THROUGH THE STUFF IN THIS VENT.
LISTEN UP! I NEED VOLUNTEERS TO FAN OUT AROUND THE CORRIDORS, IN CASE ANYONE ELSE COMES SNOOPING AROUND...

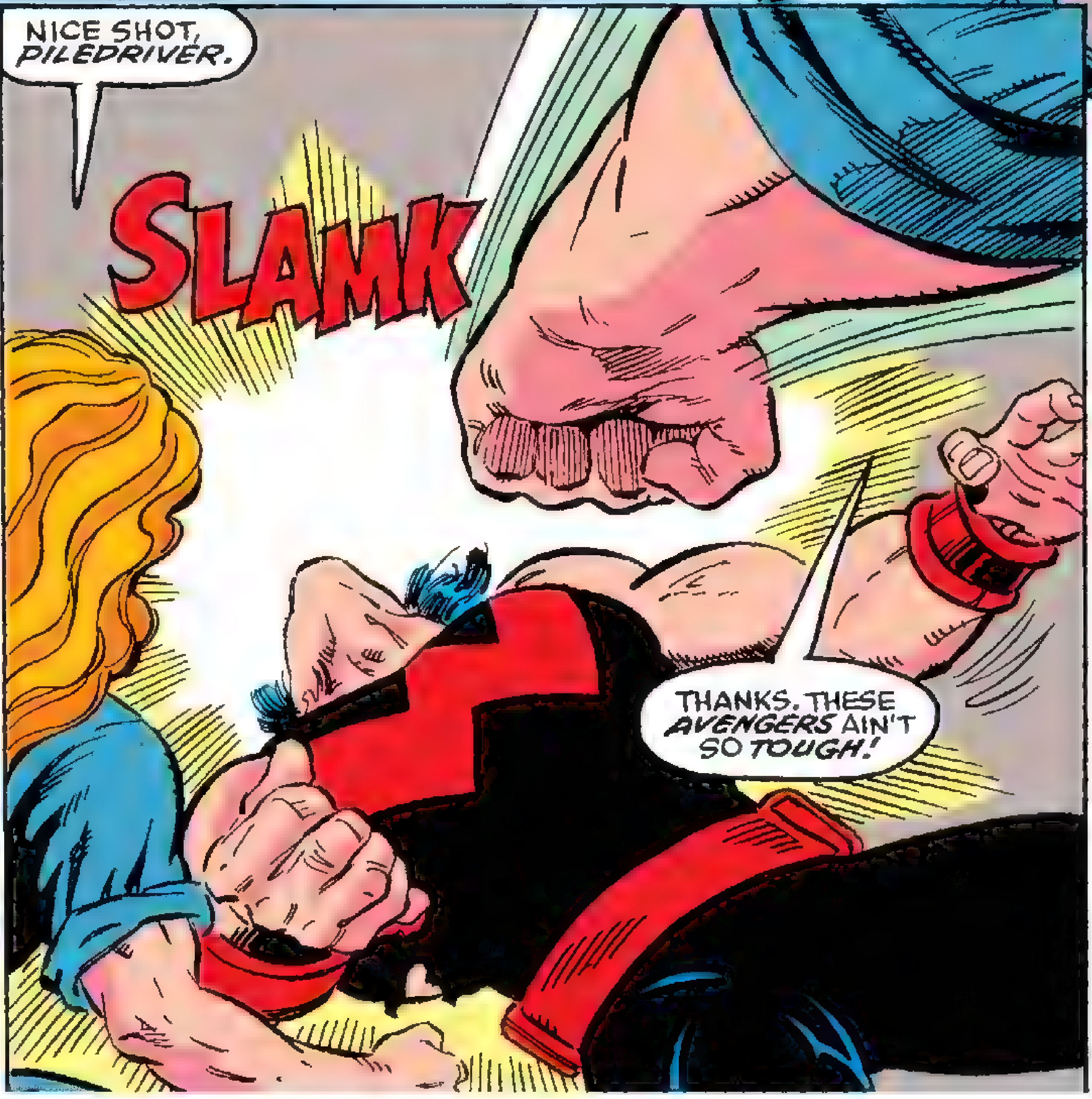

AND, IN A UTILITY TUNNEL A HUNDRED FEET ABOVE...
OKAY, SO WE'VE SPLIT INTO THREE TEAMS. IS THAT A PLAN?
UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, SIMON--THE TIME FACTOR, THE CHAOS--IT'LL HAVE TO DO.
NOTHING TO IT. STOP THE CONVICTS, SAVE THE HOSTAGES--AND DON'T LET THE PLACE BLOW UP.
AND DON'T MAKE ANY MISTAKES.
I'M AFRAID VISION MIGHT HAVE. THE INMATES MUST'VE GOTTEN HIM.
WE'LL FIND HIM. BUT STAY ALERT.
THE SAME DEFENSES DESIGNED TO KEEP CONS FROM GETTING OUT--
--COULD ALSO NAIL US SNEAKING--
--IN!
UH-OH.
KLIK
LASERS!
I ≷UNH≶ CAN PROTECT YOU TWO FROM 'EM FOR A LITTLE WHILE ≷UNH≶--
BUT WE NEED TO DISARM THEM, SIMON. I KNOW.
I'LL SHRINK DOWN TO WASP-SIZE--
--AND ZAP THE BLASTERS WITH MY STINGS!
SZZAKK
NO DICE! THEY'RE TOO WELL-SHIELD--
AAGH!
JAN--

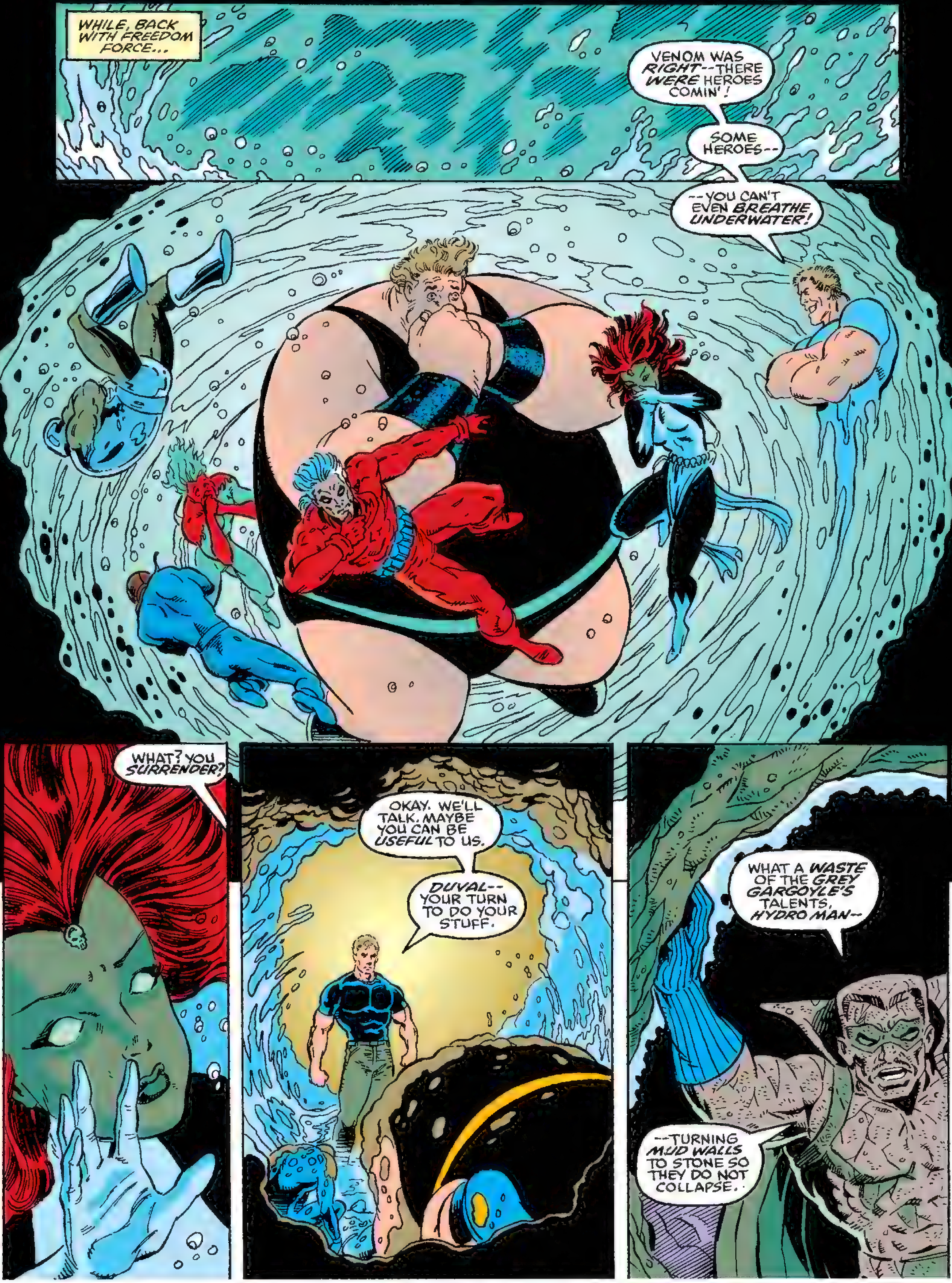

--G-GET *BACK* H-HERE...
EVEN WONDY'S IMPERVIOUS SKIN CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE.
HAWKEYE--I THINK I SEE THE MAIN *CIRCUIT-PANEL* FOR THE LASERS. IT *COULD* BE, ANYWAY...
...BUT I DON'T THINK I CAN *EVADE* THE BLASTS TO GET TO IT--OR DO ANYTHING EVEN IF I *COULD*.
I'VE BEEN COUNTING THE *TIMING* OF THE LASERS' FIRING PATTERN, JAN.
I CAN FIRE A *NULL-FIELD* ARROW AT THE CONSOLE--ONE WITH A SMALL ENOUGH RANGE, IT WON'T BLOW OUT THE ENTIRE PLACE'S DEFENSES--
--BUT IT'LL JUST *BOUNCE* OFF BEFORE IT CAN DO ANY GOOD!
LEAVE THAT TO *ME*, HAWK!
AH! I SEE WHAT YOU'RE--
--GETTING AT!
SZZZINGG
BULLSEYE! NOW, IF I CAN HOLD IT IN PLACE--
YES! THE BLASTS *STOPPED!*
ANYBODY GOT SOME *BACTINE*...?
THANKS FOR SHUTTING OFF THOSE *LASERS*, AVENGERS--

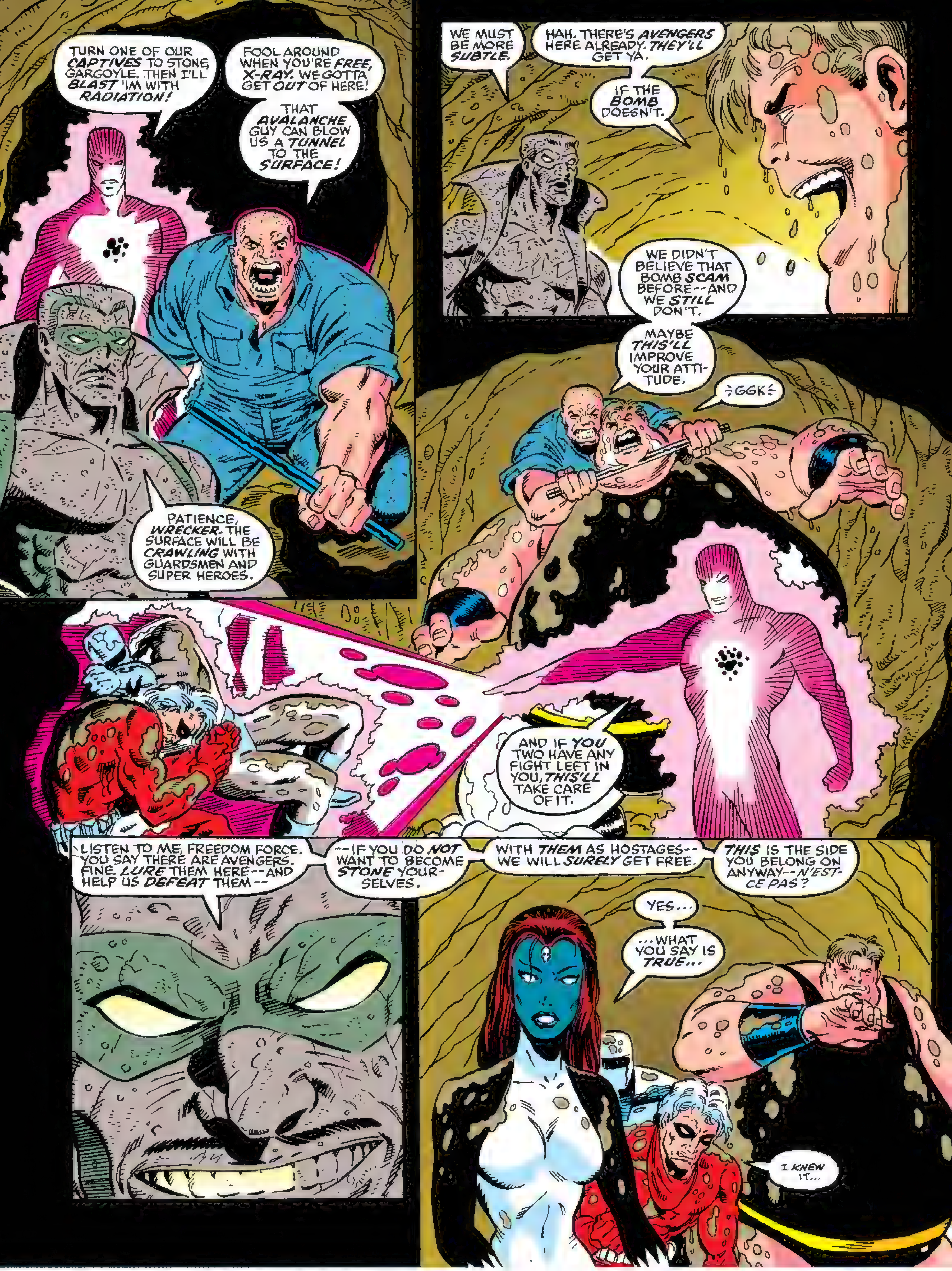

--IT'LL MAKE IT THAT MUCH EASIER TO *GET* TO YOU!
WASP-- *MOONSTONE.* HAWK-- *PILEDRIVER.*
I'LL TAKE MS. TITANIA.

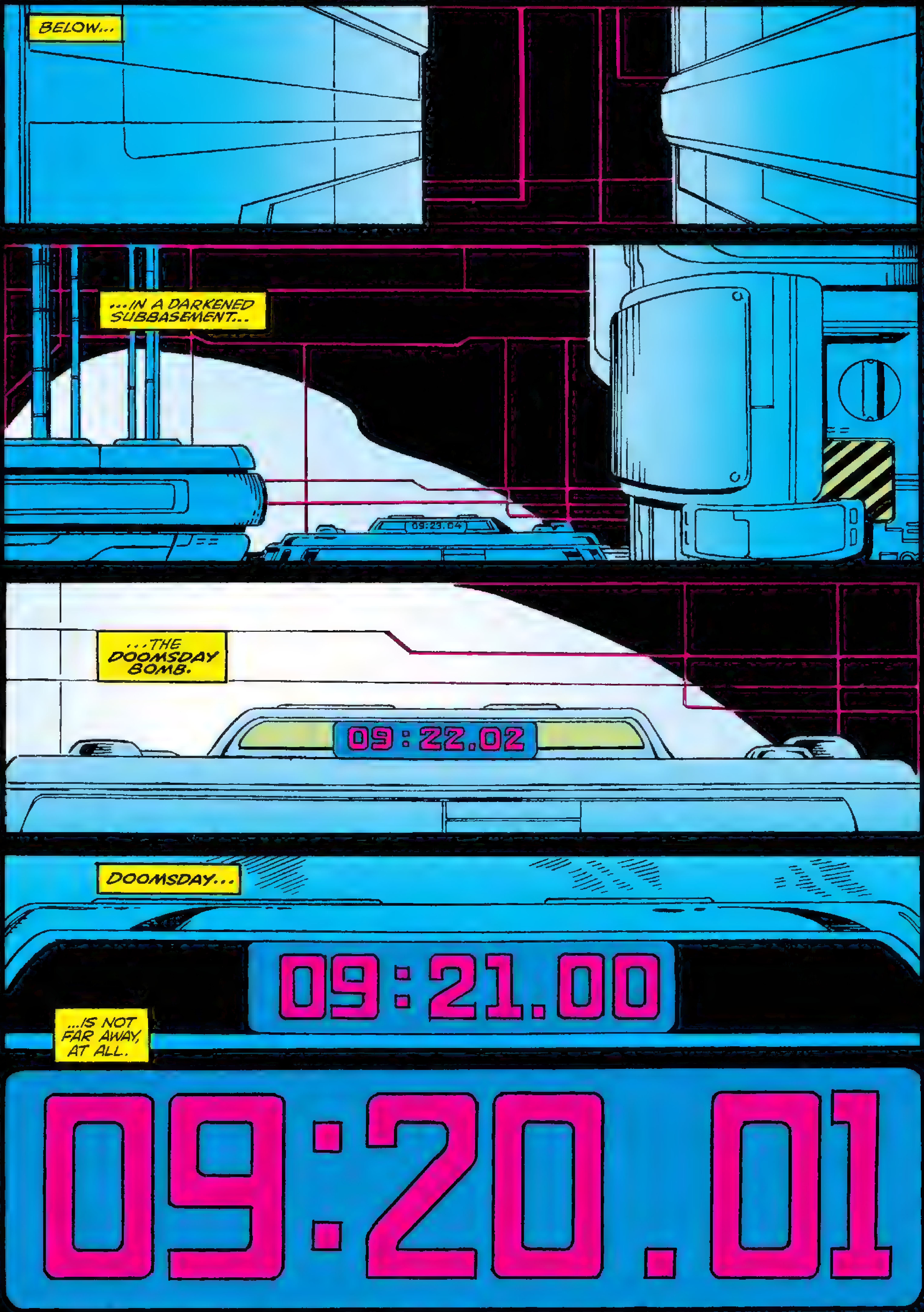

SHZZAKK
OH, *WILL* YOU, MR. MOVIE STAR?
BOK
THOSE SILLY STINGS OF YOURS ARE *NOTHING* TO MY *FORCE-BLASTS,* WASP.
UH!
STILL... WEAK... FROM LASERS...

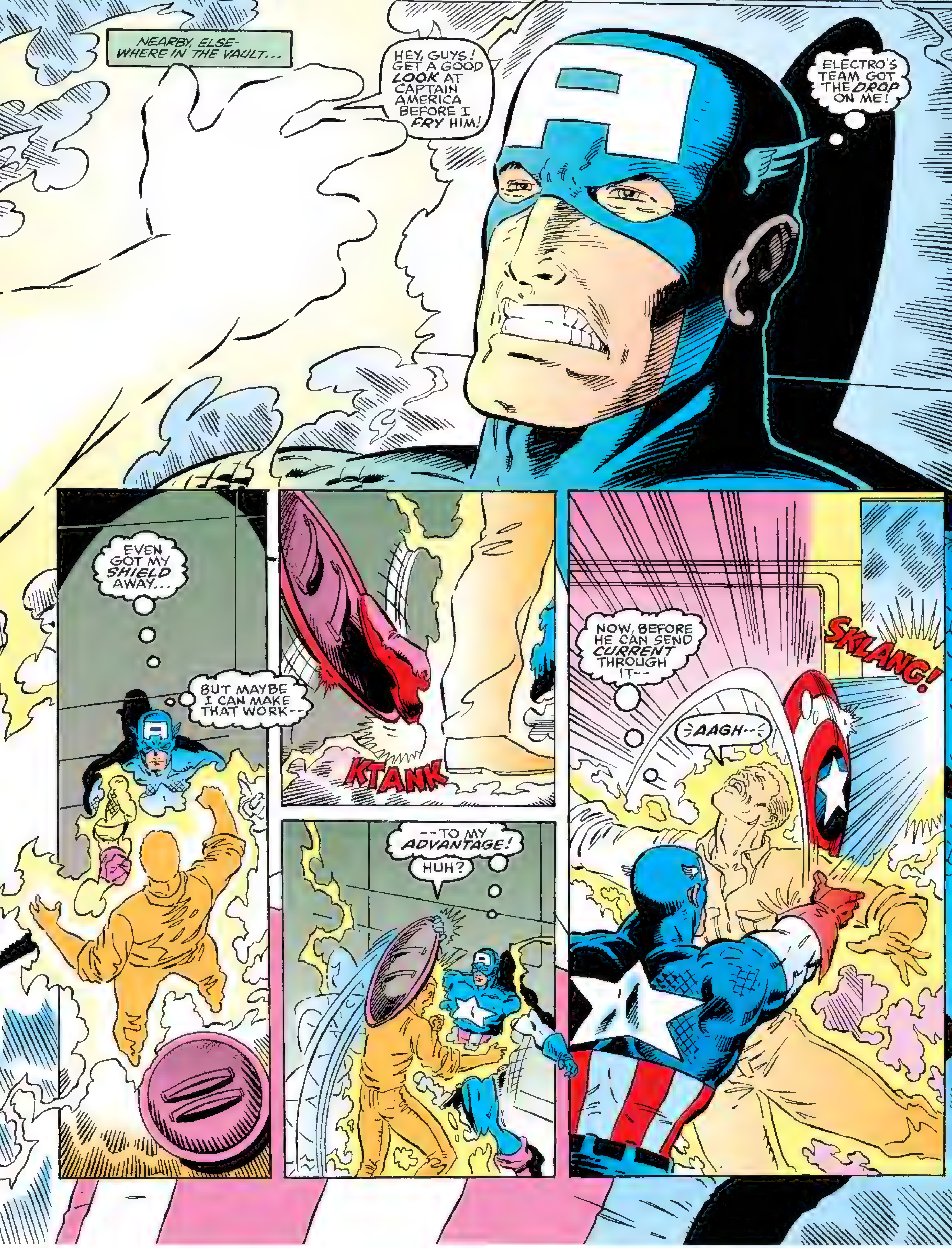

ONE WELL-PLACED *SLEEP-GAS* ARROW, AND--
UNGF!
GEE-- DID THEY FORGET--
WHUK
WHUK
WHUK
WHUK
--TO TELL YOU THAT *SPEED DEMON*--
--WAS HERE, TOO?!

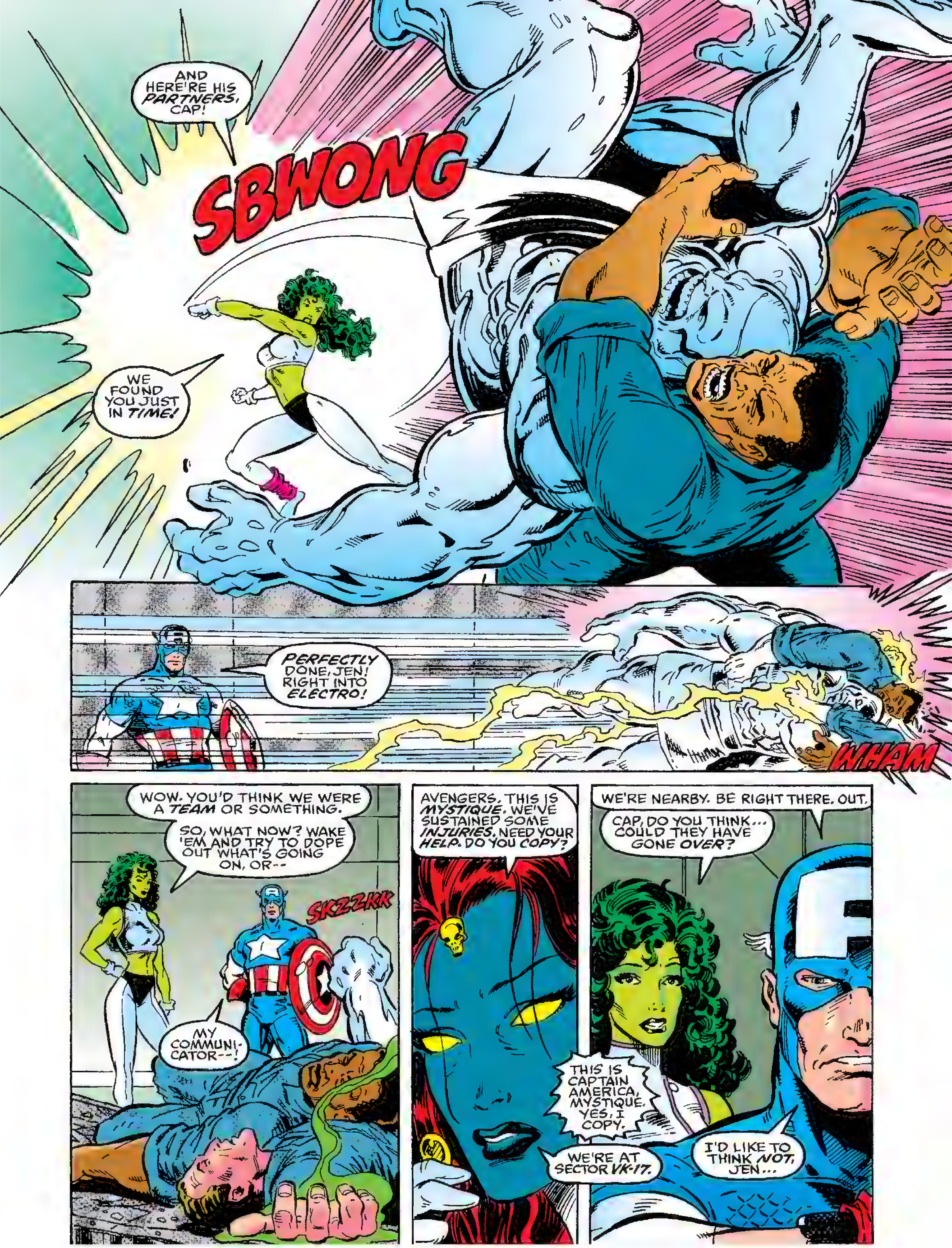

NICE SHOT, *PILEDRIVER.*
SLAMK
THANKS. THESE *AVENGERS* AIN'T SO *TOUGH!*

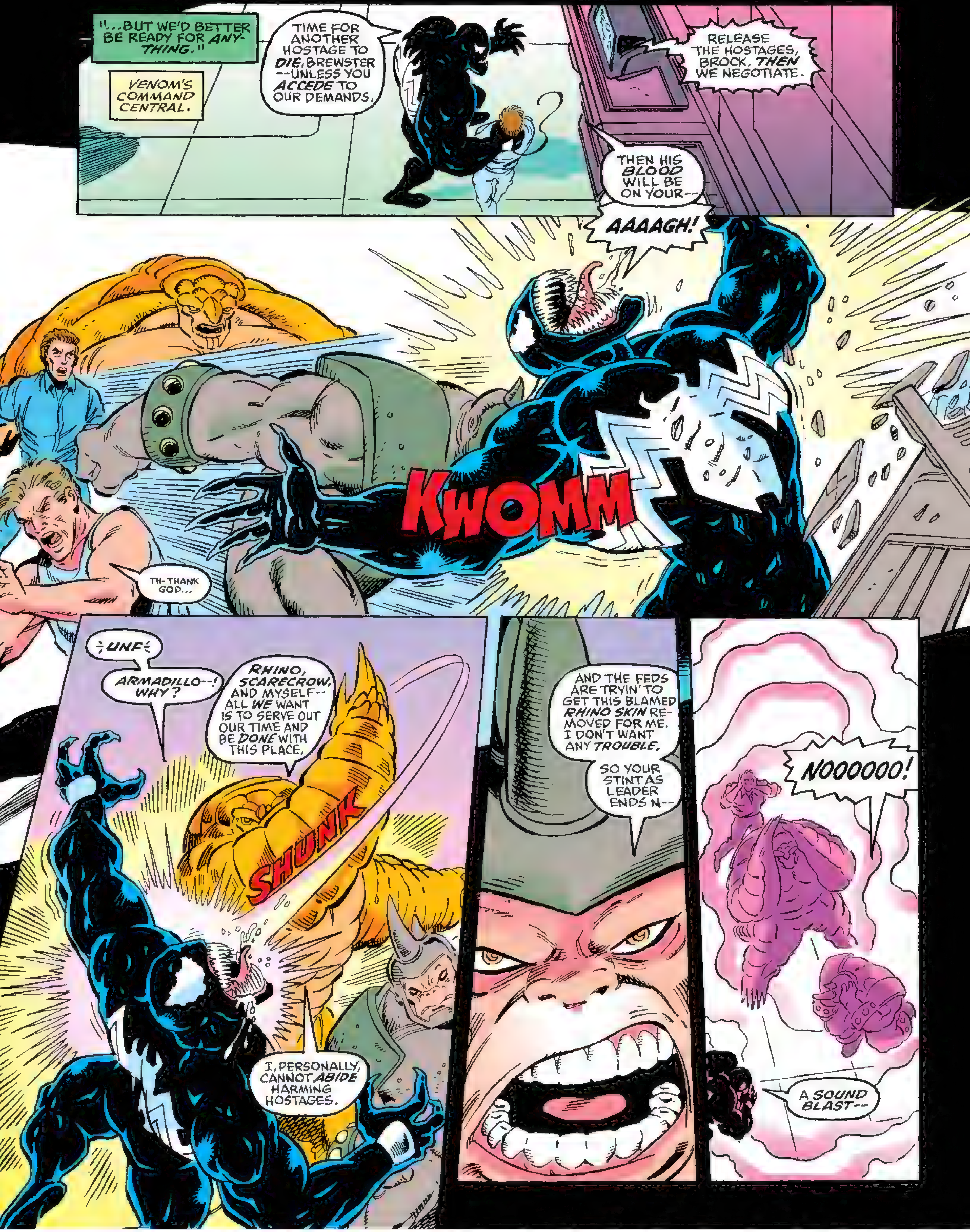

WHILE, BACK WITH FREEDOM FORCE...
VENOM WAS *RIGHT*--THERE *WERE* HEROES COMIN'!
SOME HEROES--
--YOU CAN'T EVEN *BREATHE UNDERWATER!*
WHAT? YOU *SURRENDER?*
OKAY. WE'LL TALK. MAYBE YOU CAN BE *USEFUL* TO US.
DUVAL--YOUR TURN TO DO YOUR STUFF.
WHAT A *WASTE* OF THE *GREY GARGOYLE'S* TALENTS, *HYDRO MAN*--
--TURNING *MUD WALLS* TO STONE SO THEY DO NOT COLLAPSE.

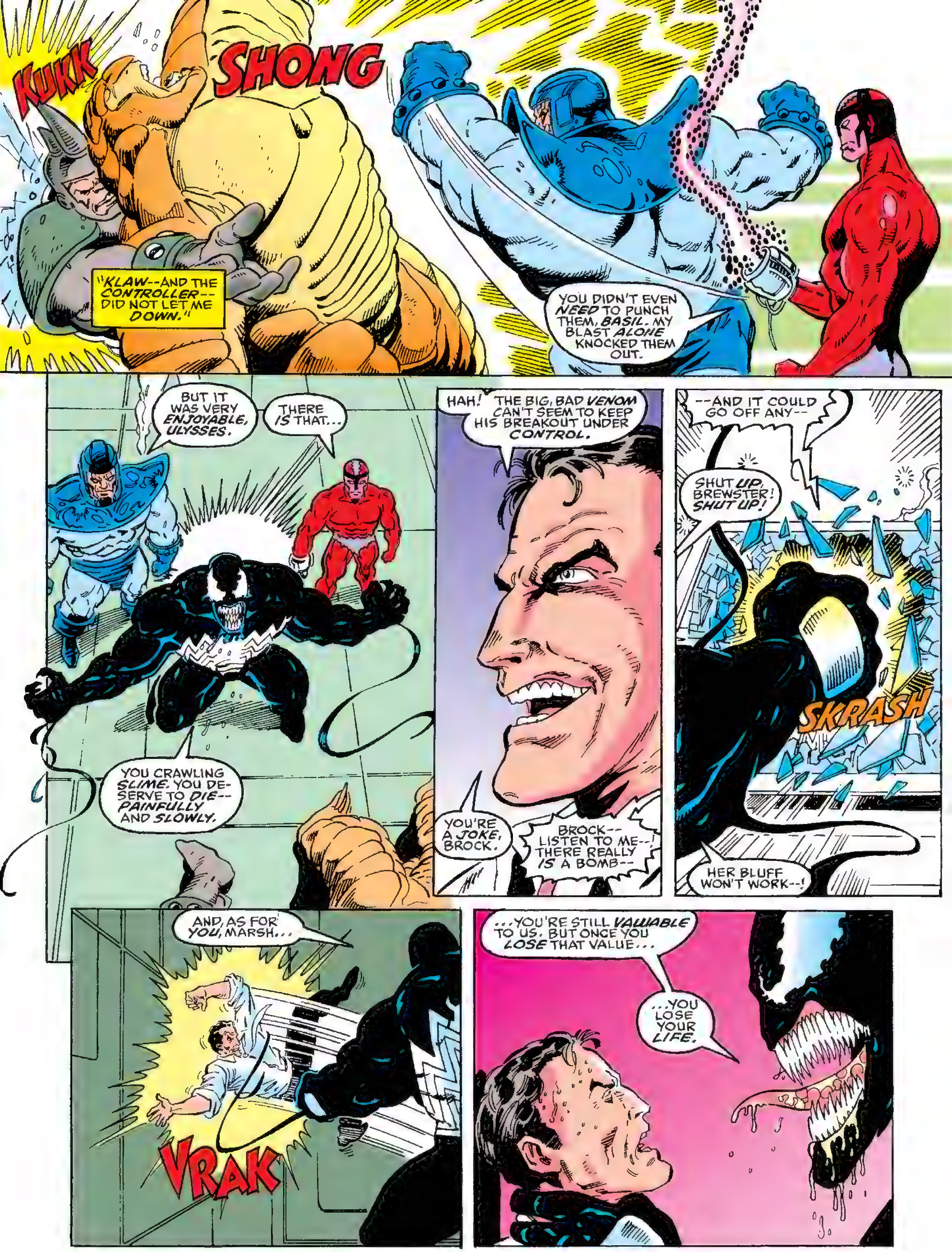

TURN ONE OF OUR CAPTIVES TO STONE, GARGOYLE. THEN I'LL BLAST 'IM WITH RADIATION!
FOOL AROUND WHEN YOU'RE FREE, X-RAY. WE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE!
THAT AVALANCHE GUY CAN BLOW US A TUNNEL TO THE SURFACE!
PATIENCE, WRECKER. THE SURFACE WILL BE CRAWLING WITH GUARDSMEN AND SUPER HEROES.
WE MUST BE MORE SUBTLE.
HAH. THERE'S AVENGERS HERE ALREADY. THEY'LL GET YA.
IF THE BOMB DOESN'T.
WE DIDN'T BELIEVE THAT BOMB SCAM BEFORE--AND WE STILL DON'T.
MAYBE THIS'LL IMPROVE YOUR ATTITUDE.
GGK
AND IF YOU TWO HAVE ANY FIGHT LEFT IN YOU, THIS'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.
LISTEN TO ME, FREEDOM FORCE. YOU SAY THERE ARE AVENGERS. FINE. LURE THEM HERE--AND HELP US DEFEAT THEM--
--IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO BECOME STONE YOURSELVES.
WITH THEM AS HOSTAGES--WE WILL SURELY GET FREE.
THIS IS THE SIDE YOU BELONG ON ANYWAY--N'EST-CE PAS?
YES...
...WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE...
I KNEW IT...

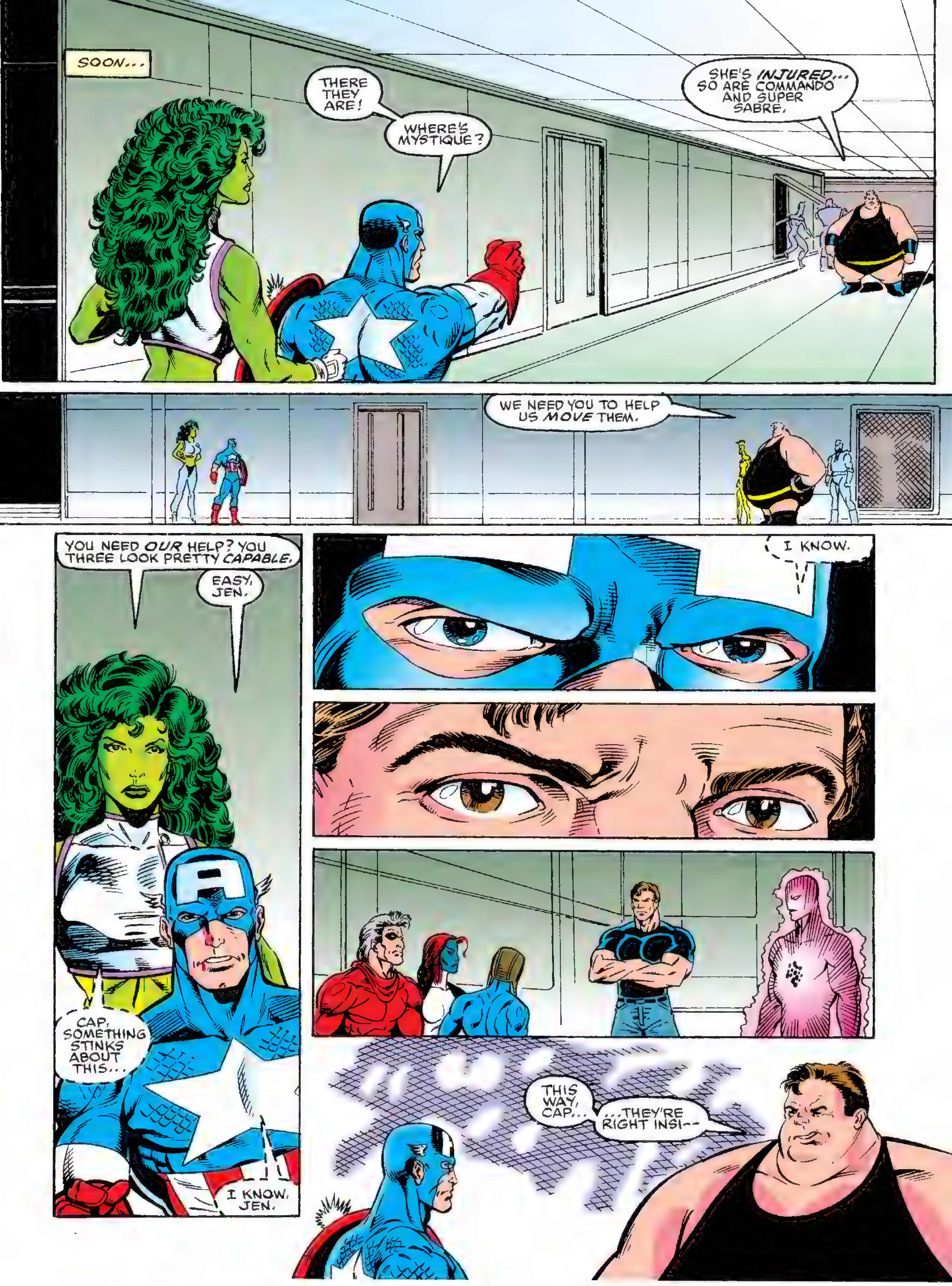

BELOW...
...IN A DARKENED SUBBASEMENT...
09:23.04
...THE DOOMSDAY BOMB.
09:22.02
DOOMSDAY...
09:21.00
...IS NOT FAR AWAY, AT ALL.
09:20.01

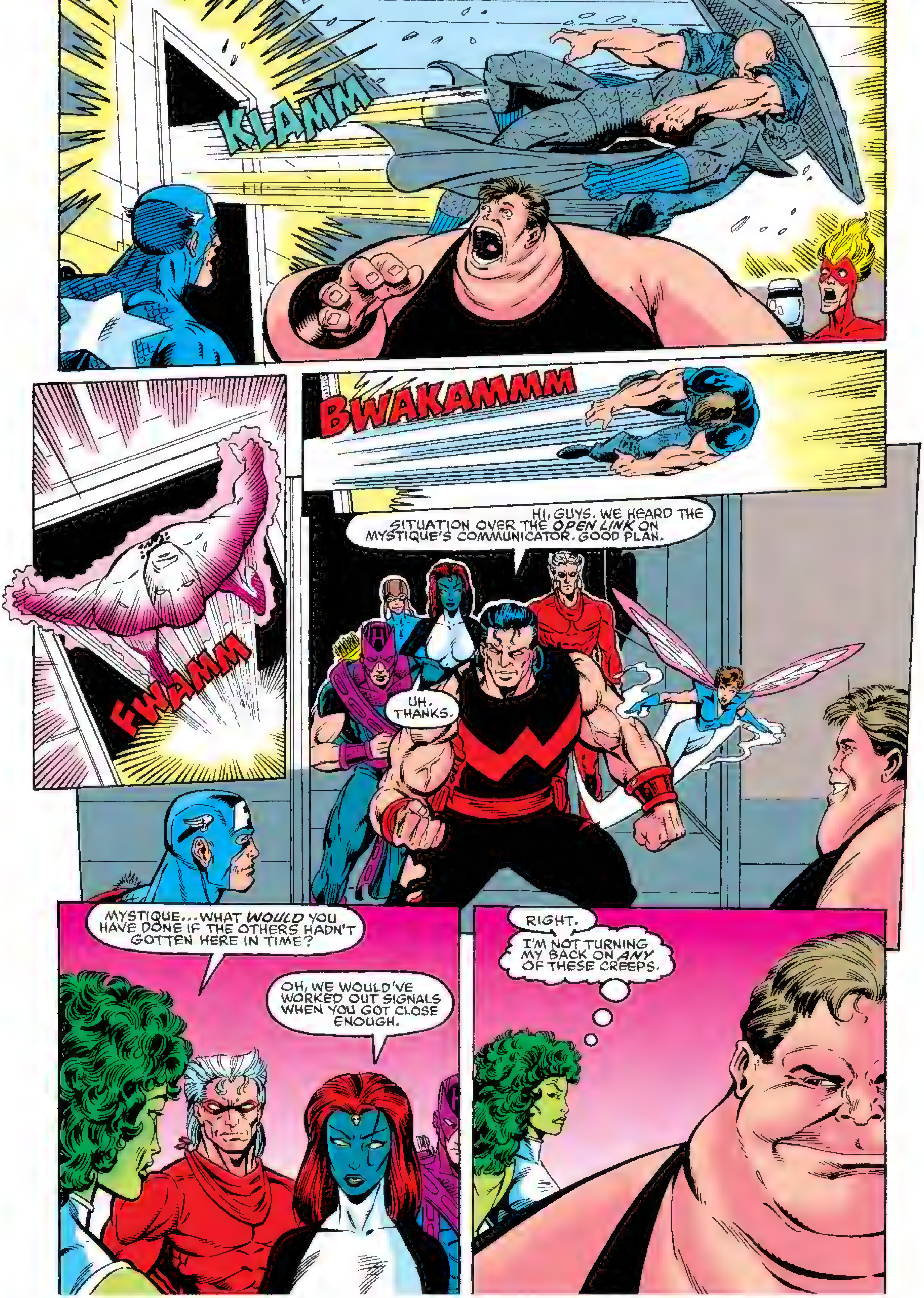

NEARBY, ELSEWHERE IN THE VAULT...
HEY, GUYS! GET A GOOD LOOK AT CAPTAIN AMERICA BEFORE I FRY HIM!
ELECTRO'S TEAM GOT THE DROP ON ME!
EVEN GOT MY SHIELD AWAY...
BUT MAYBE I CAN MAKE THAT WORK--
KTANK
--TO MY ADVANTAGE!
HUH?
NOW, BEFORE HE CAN SEND CURRENT THROUGH IT--
SKLANG!
AAGH--

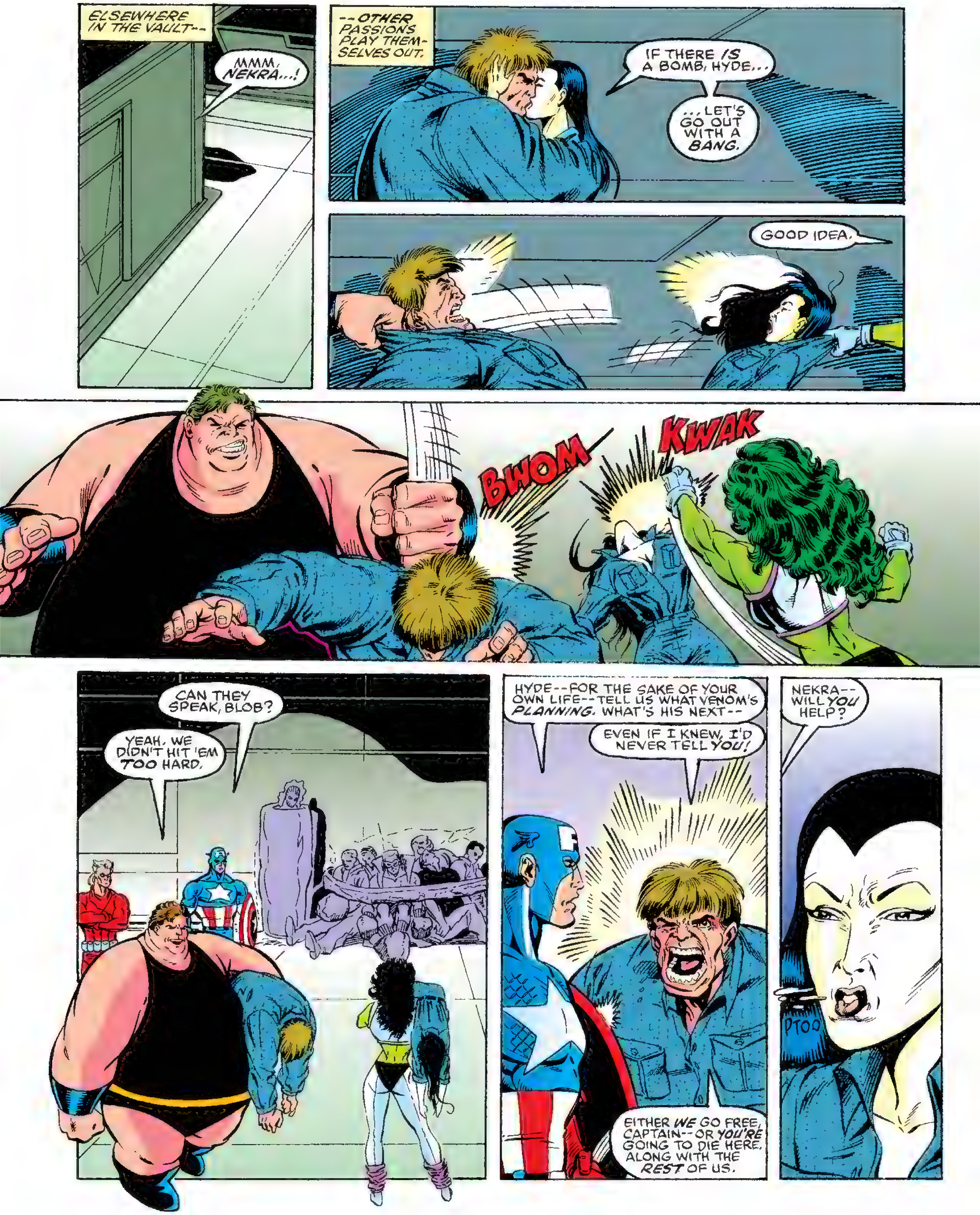

AND HERE'RE HIS *PARTNERS*, CAP!
SBWONG
WE FOUND YOU JUST IN *TIME!*
PERFECTLY DONE, JEN! RIGHT INTO *ELECTRO!*
WHAM
WOW. YOU'D THINK WE WERE A *TEAM* OR SOMETHING.
SO, WHAT NOW? WAKE 'EM AND TRY TO DOPE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON, OR--
SKZZKK
MY COMMUNI-CATOR--!
AVENGERS. THIS IS *MYSTIQUE*. WE'VE SUSTAINED SOME *INJURIES*. NEED YOUR *HELP*. DO YOU *COPY?*
THIS IS CAPTAIN AMERICA, MYSTIQUE. YES, I COPY.
WE'RE AT SECTOR *VK-17*.
WE'RE NEARBY. BE RIGHT THERE. OUT.
CAP, DO YOU THINK... COULD THEY HAVE GONE *OVER?*
I'D LIKE TO THINK *NOT*, JEN...

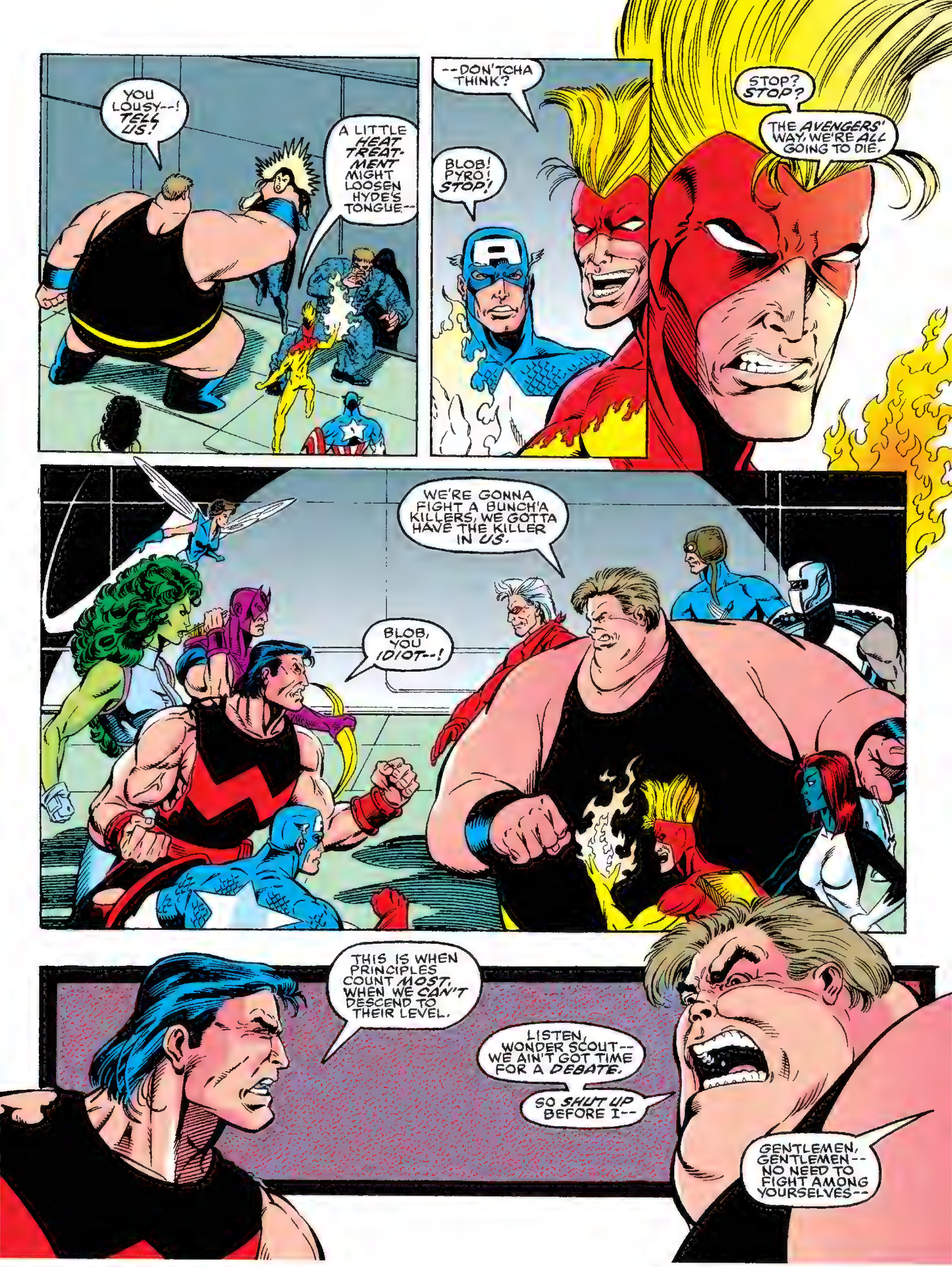

"...BUT WE'D BETTER BE READY FOR *ANYTHING.*"
VENOM'S COMMAND CENTRAL.
TIME FOR ANOTHER HOSTAGE TO *DIE*, BREWSTER --UNLESS YOU *ACCEDE* TO OUR DEMANDS.
RELEASE THE HOSTAGES, BROCK. *THEN* WE NEGOTIATE.
THEN HIS *BLOOD* WILL BE ON YOUR--
AAAAGH!
KWOMM
TH-THANK GOD...
UNF
ARMADILLO--! WHY?
RHINO, SCARECROW, AND MYSELF--ALL *WE* WANT IS TO SERVE OUT OUR TIME AND BE *DONE* WITH THIS PLACE.
SHUNK
I, PERSONALLY, CANNOT *ABIDE* HARMING HOSTAGES.
AND THE FEDS ARE TRYIN' TO GET THIS BLAMED *RHINO SKIN* REMOVED FOR ME. I DON'T WANT ANY *TROUBLE.*
SO YOUR STINT AS LEADER ENDS N--
NOOOOOO!
A *SOUND BLAST*--

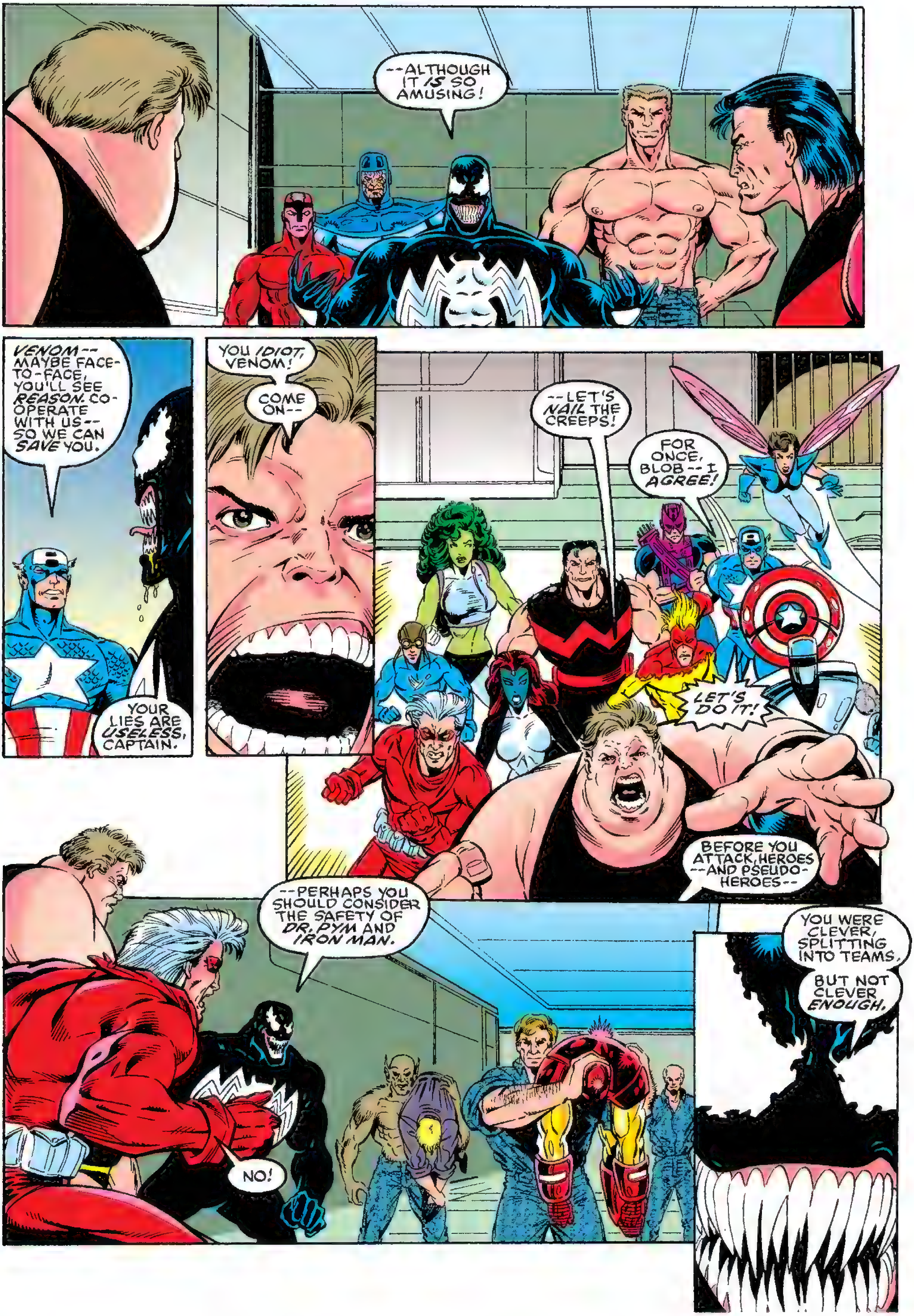

KUKK
SHONG
"KLAW--AND THE CONTROLLER--DID NOT LET ME DOWN."
YOU DIDN'T EVEN NEED TO PUNCH THEM, BASIL. MY BLAST ALONE KNOCKED THEM OUT.
BUT IT WAS VERY ENJOYABLE, ULYSSES.
THERE IS THAT...
YOU CRAWLING SLIME. YOU DESERVE TO DIE--PAINFULLY AND SLOWLY.
HAH! THE BIG, BAD VENOM CAN'T SEEM TO KEEP HIS BREAKOUT UNDER CONTROL.
YOU'RE A JOKE, BROCK.
BROCK--LISTEN TO ME--! THERE REALLY IS A BOMB--
--AND IT COULD GO OFF ANY--
SHUT UP, BREWSTER! SHUT UP!
SKRASH
HER BLUFF WON'T WORK--!
AND, AS FOR YOU, MARSH...
VRAK
...YOU'RE STILL VALUABLE TO US. BUT ONCE YOU LOSE THAT VALUE...
...YOU LOSE YOUR LIFE.

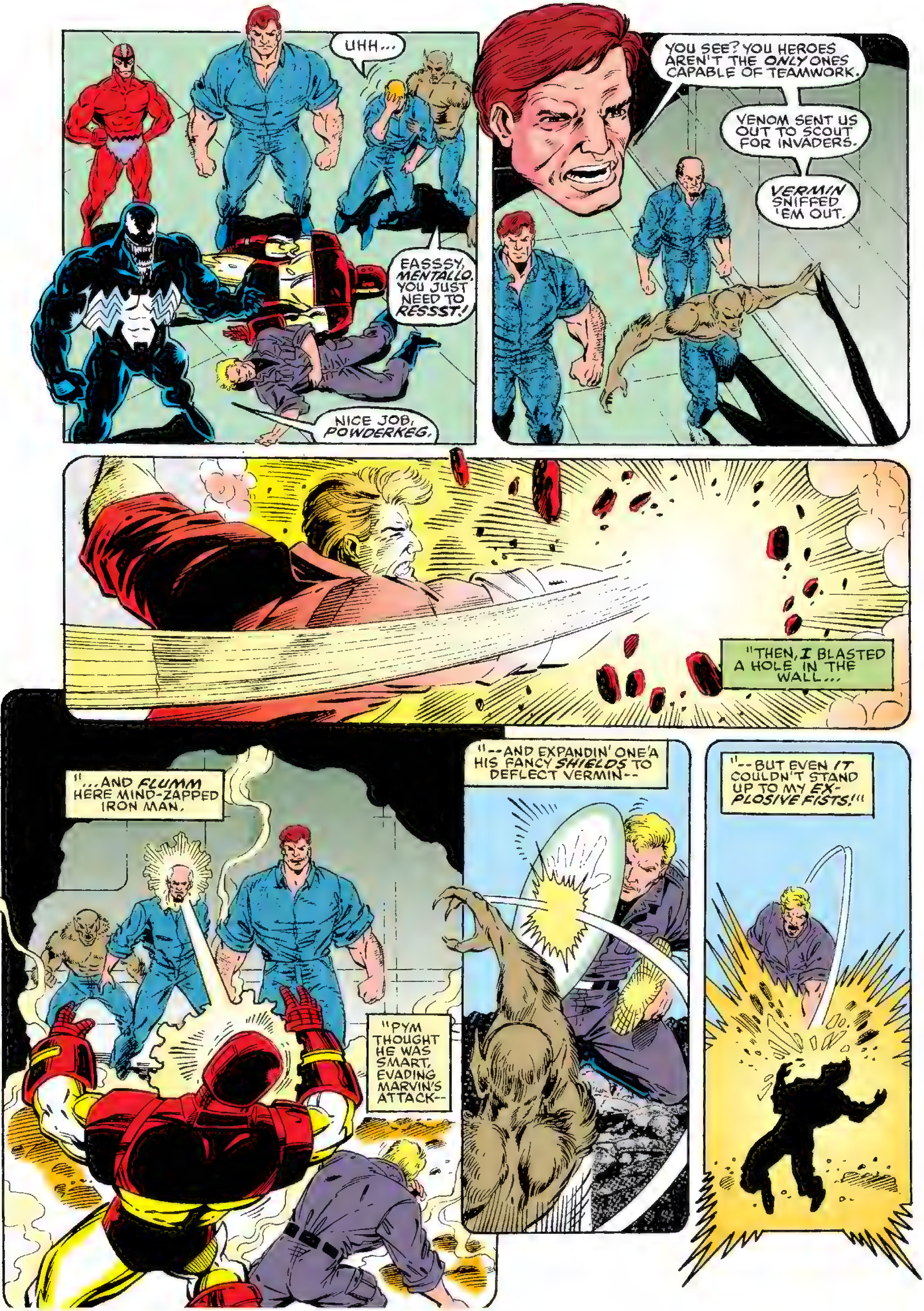

SOON...
THERE THEY ARE!
WHERE'S MYSTIQUE?
SHE'S INJURED... SO ARE COMMANDO AND SUPER SABRE.
WE NEED YOU TO HELP US MOVE THEM.
YOU NEED OUR HELP? YOU THREE LOOK PRETTY CAPABLE.
EASY, JEN.
CAP, SOMETHING STINKS ABOUT THIS...
I KNOW, JEN.
I KNOW.
THIS WAY, CAP...
...THEY'RE RIGHT INSI--

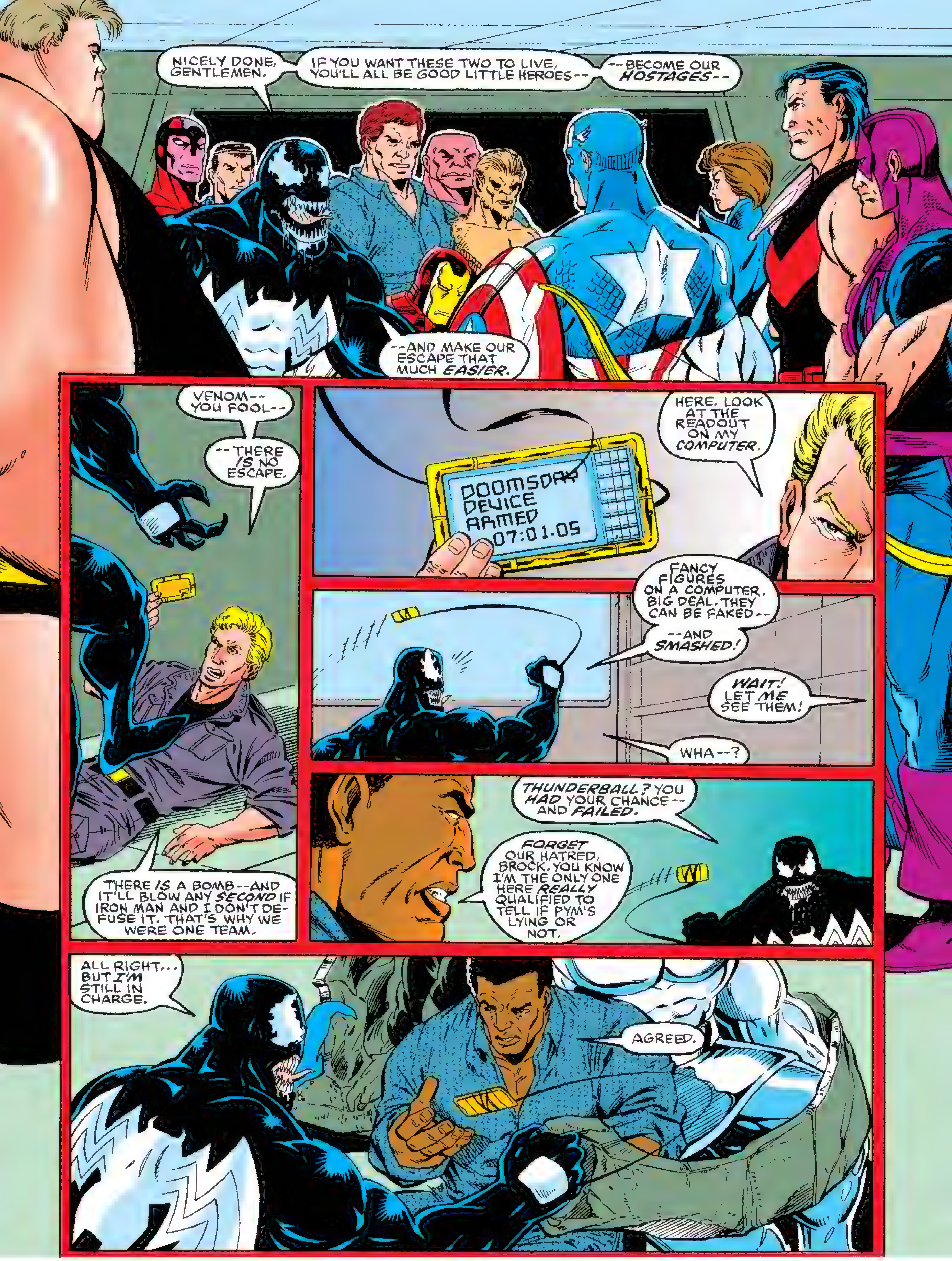

KLAMM
FWAMM
BWAKAMMMM
HI, GUYS. WE HEARD THE SITUATION OVER THE *OPEN LINK* ON MYSTIQUE'S COMMUNICATOR. GOOD PLAN.
UH. THANKS.
MYSTIQUE... WHAT *WOULD* YOU HAVE DONE IF THE OTHERS HADN'T GOTTEN HERE IN TIME?
OH, WE WOULD'VE WORKED OUT SIGNALS WHEN YOU GOT CLOSE ENOUGH.
RIGHT.
I'M NOT TURNING MY BACK ON *ANY* OF THESE CREEPS.

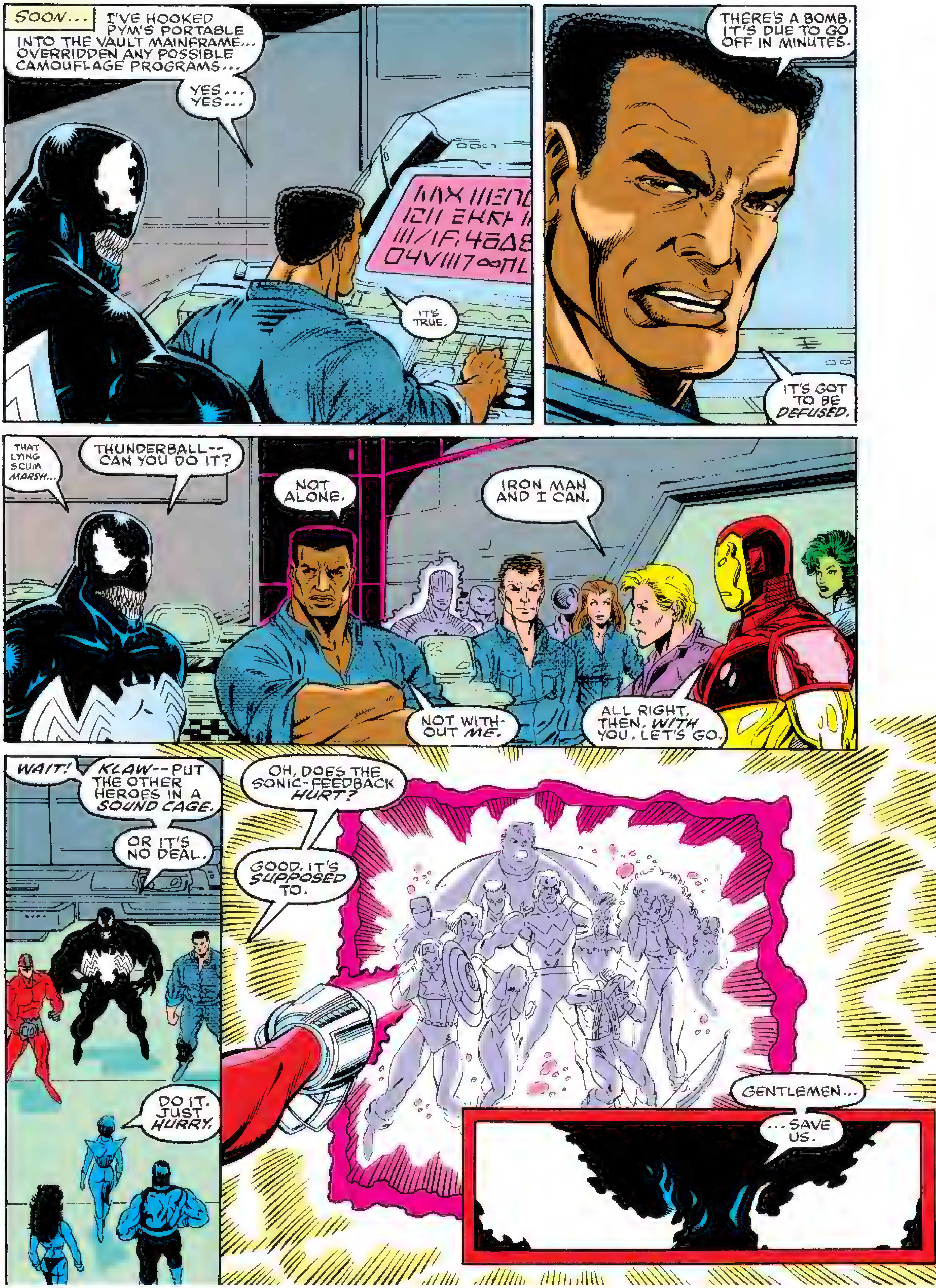

ELSEWHERE IN THE VAULT--
MMM, NEKRA...!
--OTHER PASSIONS PLAY THEMSELVES OUT.
IF THERE IS A BOMB, HYDE...
...LET'S GO OUT WITH A BANG.
GOOD IDEA.
BWOM
KWAK
CAN THEY SPEAK, BLOB?
YEAH. WE DIDN'T HIT 'EM TOO HARD.
HYDE--FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR OWN LIFE--TELL US WHAT VENOM'S PLANNING. WHAT'S HIS NEXT--
EVEN IF I KNEW, I'D NEVER TELL YOU!
EITHER WE GO FREE, CAPTAIN--OR YOU'RE GOING TO DIE HERE, ALONG WITH THE REST OF US.
NEKRA--WILL YOU HELP?
PTOO

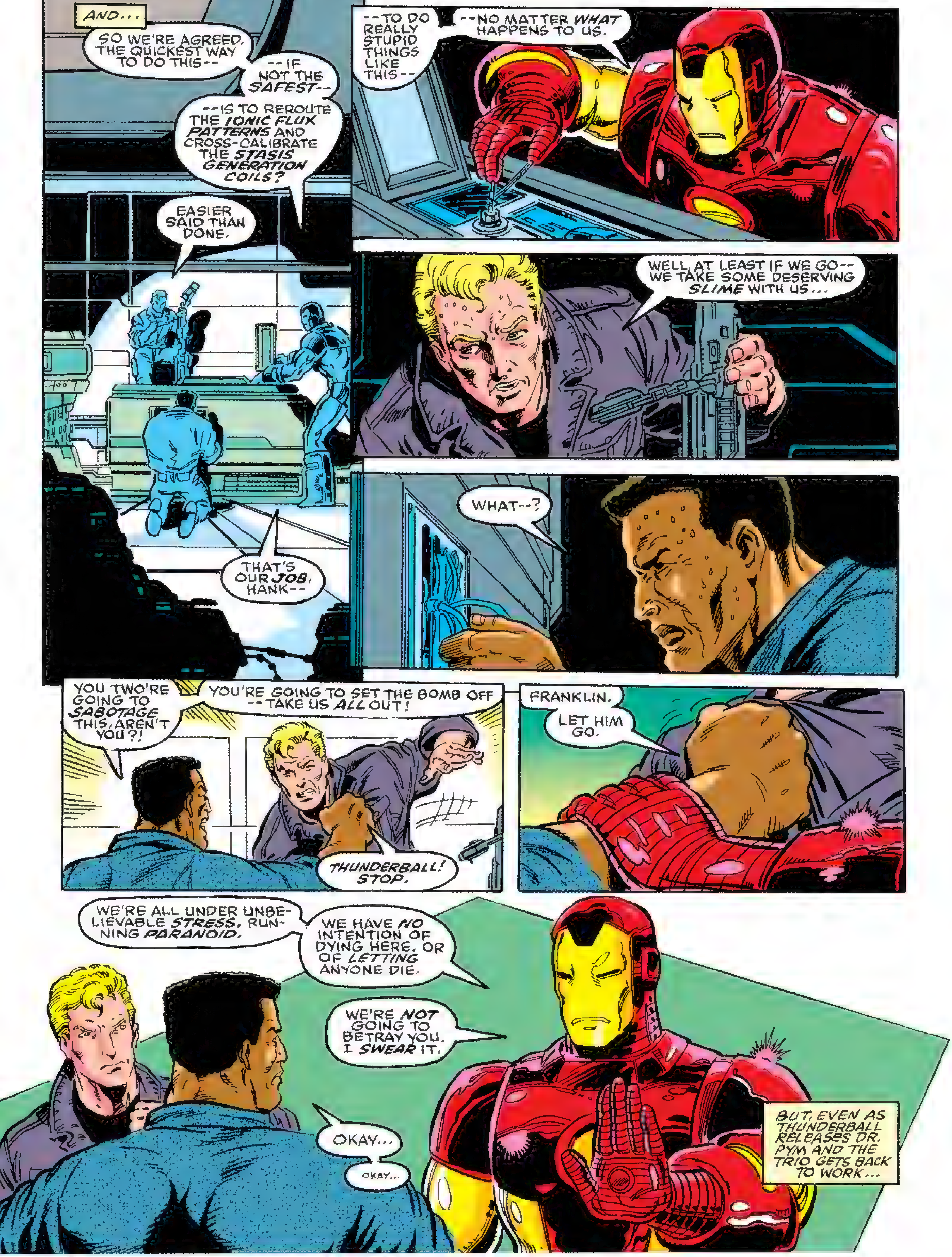

YOU LOUSY--! *TELL US!*
A LITTLE *HEAT TREATMENT* MIGHT LOOSEN HYDE'S TONGUE--
--DON'TCHA THINK?
BLOB! PYRO! *STOP!*
STOP? *STOP?*
THE *AVENGERS'* WAY, WE'RE *ALL* GOING TO DIE.
WE'RE GONNA FIGHT A BUNCH'A KILLERS, WE GOTTA HAVE THE KILLER IN *US.*
BLOB, YOU *IDIOT--!*
THIS IS WHEN PRINCIPLES COUNT *MOST,* WHEN WE *CAN'T* DESCEND TO THEIR LEVEL.
LISTEN, WONDER SCOUT-- WE AIN'T GOT TIME FOR A *DEBATE.*
SO *SHUT UP* BEFORE I--
GENTLEMEN, GENTLEMEN-- NO NEED TO FIGHT AMONG YOURSELVES--

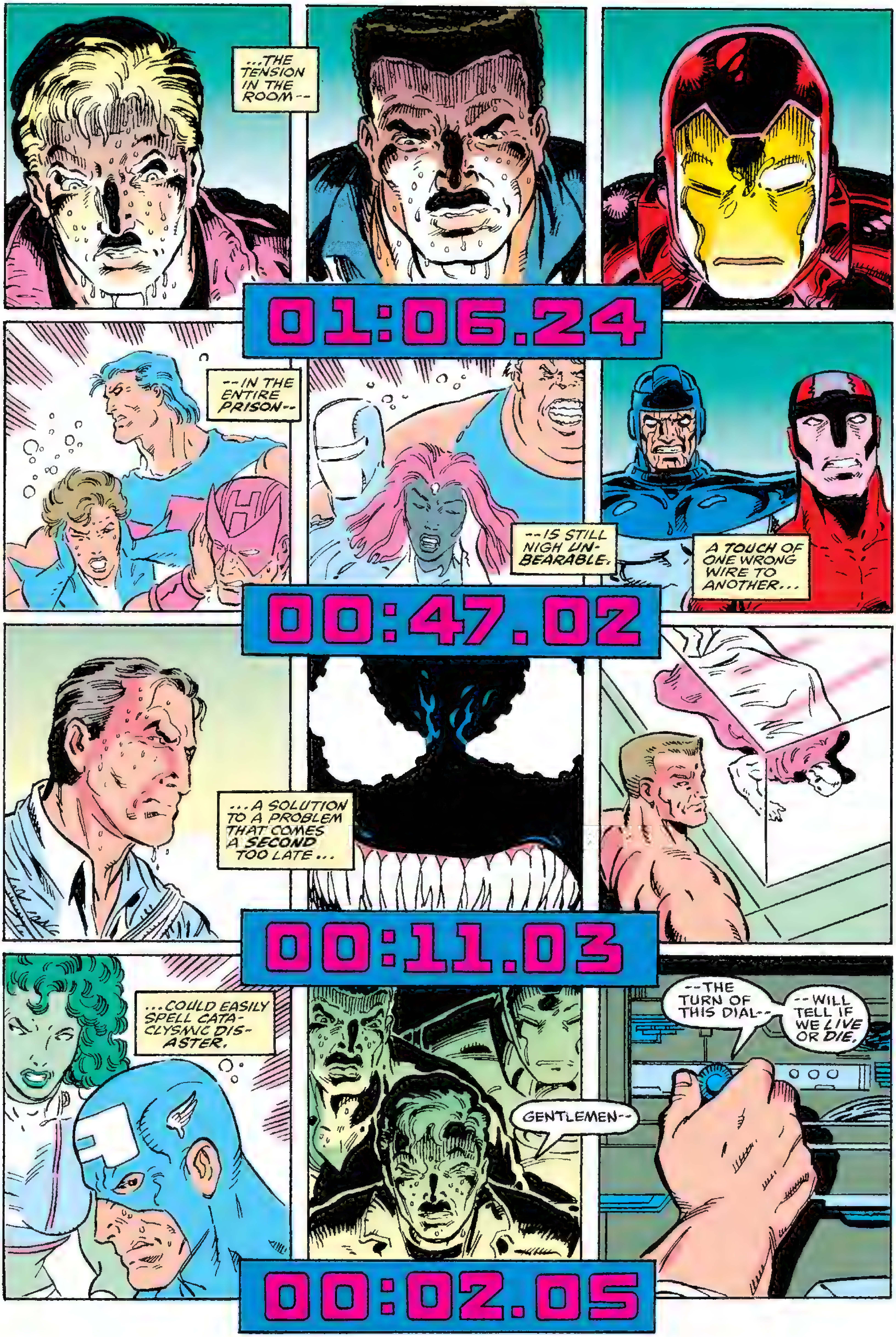

--ALTHOUGH IT *IS* SO AMUSING!
VENOM-- MAYBE FACE-TO-FACE, YOU'LL SEE *REASON.* CO-OPERATE WITH US-- SO WE CAN *SAVE* YOU.
YOUR LIES ARE *USELESS,* CAPTAIN.
YOU *IDIOT,* VENOM!
COME ON--
--LET'S *NAIL* THE CREEPS!
FOR ONCE, BLOB -- I *AGREE!*
LET'S DO IT!
BEFORE YOU ATTACK, HEROES --AND PSEUDO-HEROES--
--PERHAPS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER THE SAFETY OF *DR. PYM* AND *IRON MAN.*
NO!
YOU WERE CLEVER, SPLITTING INTO TEAMS.
BUT NOT CLEVER *ENOUGH.*


UHH...
EASSSY, MENTALLO. YOU JUST NEED TO RESSST!
NICE JOB, POWDERKEG.
YOU SEE? YOU HEROES AREN'T THE ONLY ONES CAPABLE OF TEAMWORK.
VENOM SENT US OUT TO SCOUT FOR INVADERS.
VERMIN SNIFFED 'EM OUT.
"THEN, I BLASTED A HOLE IN THE WALL...
"...AND FLUMM HERE MIND-ZAPPED IRON MAN.
"PYM THOUGHT HE WAS SMART, EVADING MARVIN'S ATTACK--
"--AND EXPANDIN' ONE'A HIS FANCY SHIELDS TO DEFLECT VERMIN--
"--BUT EVEN IT COULDN'T STAND UP TO MY EXPLOSIVE FISTS!"

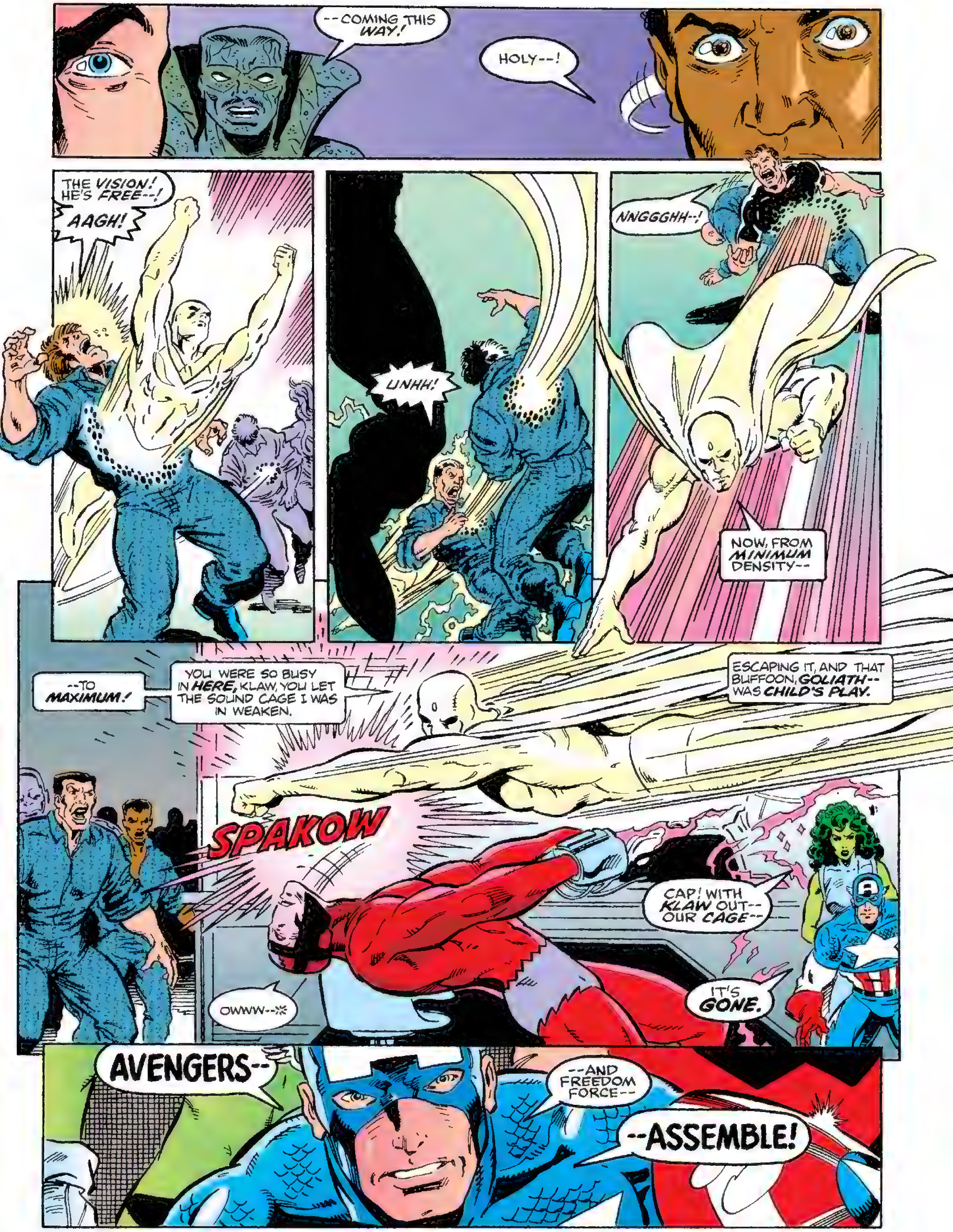

NICELY DONE, GENTLEMEN.
IF YOU WANT THESE TWO TO LIVE, YOU'LL ALL BE GOOD LITTLE HEROES--
--BECOME OUR *HOSTAGES*--
--AND MAKE OUR ESCAPE THAT MUCH *EASIER*.
VENOM--YOU FOOL--
--THERE *IS* NO ESCAPE.
THERE *IS* A BOMB--AND IT'LL BLOW ANY *SECOND* IF IRON MAN AND I DON'T DEFUSE IT. THAT'S WHY WE WERE ONE TEAM.
HERE. LOOK AT THE READOUT ON MY *COMPUTER*.
DOOMSDAY DEVICE ARMED 07:01.05
FANCY FIGURES ON A COMPUTER. BIG DEAL. THEY CAN BE FAKED--
--AND *SMASHED!*
WAIT! LET *ME* SEE THEM!
WHA--?
THUNDERBALL? YOU *HAD* YOUR CHANCE--AND *FAILED*.
FORGET OUR HATRED, BROCK. YOU KNOW I'M THE ONLY ONE HERE *REALLY* QUALIFIED TO TELL IF PYM'S LYING OR NOT.
ALL RIGHT... BUT *I'M* STILL IN CHARGE.
AGREED.

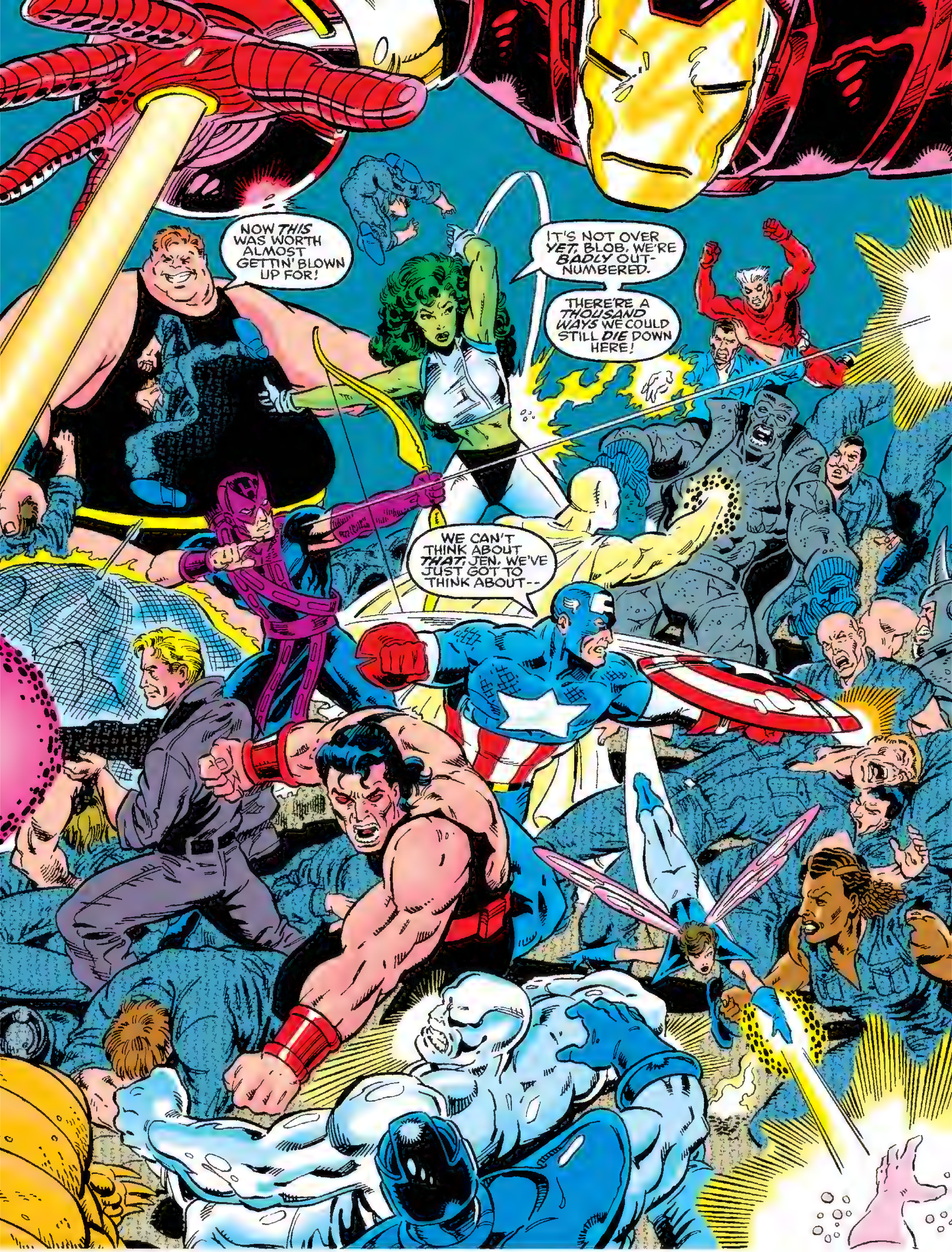

SOON...
I'VE HOOKED PYM'S PORTABLE INTO THE VAULT MAINFRAME... OVERRIDDEN ANY POSSIBLE CAMOUFLAGE PROGRAMS...
YES... YES...
IT'S TRUE.
THERE'S A BOMB. IT'S DUE TO GO OFF IN MINUTES.
IT'S GOT TO BE DEFUSED.
THAT LYING SCUM MARSH...
THUNDERBALL-- CAN YOU DO IT?
NOT ALONE.
IRON MAN AND I CAN.
NOT WITHOUT ME.
ALL RIGHT, THEN. WITH YOU. LET'S GO.
WAIT!
KLAW--PUT THE OTHER HEROES IN A SOUND CAGE.
OR IT'S NO DEAL.
DO IT. JUST HURRY.
OH, DOES THE SONIC-FEEDBACK HURT?
GOOD. IT'S SUPPOSED TO.
GENTLEMEN...
...SAVE US.

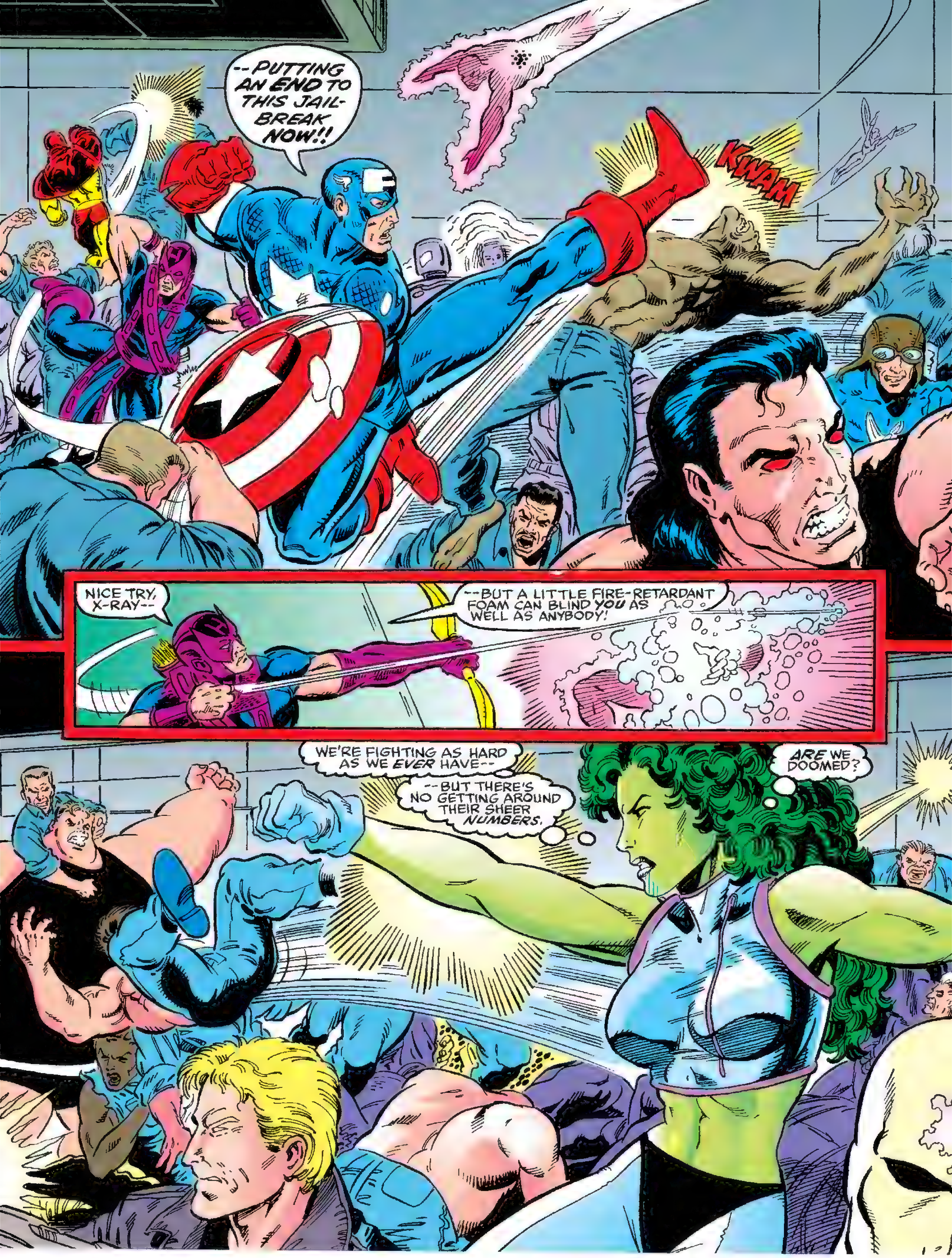

AND...
SO WE'RE AGREED. THE QUICKEST WAY TO DO THIS--
--IF NOT THE SAFEST--
--IS TO REROUTE THE IONIC FLUX PATTERNS AND CROSS-CALIBRATE THE STASIS GENERATION COILS?
EASIER SAID THAN DONE.
THAT'S OUR JOB, HANK--
--TO DO REALLY STUPID THINGS LIKE THIS--
--NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO US.
WELL, AT LEAST IF WE GO-- WE TAKE SOME DESERVING SLIME WITH US...
WHAT--?
YOU TWO'RE GOING TO SABOTAGE THIS, AREN'T YOU?!
YOU'RE GOING TO SET THE BOMB OFF --TAKE US ALL OUT!
THUNDERBALL! STOP.
FRANKLIN.
LET HIM GO.
WE'RE ALL UNDER UNBELIEVABLE STRESS. RUNNING PARANOID.
WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF DYING HERE. OR OF LETTING ANYONE DIE.
WE'RE NOT GOING TO BETRAY YOU. I SWEAR IT.
OKAY...
OKAY...
BUT, EVEN AS THUNDERBALL RELEASES DR. PYM AND THE TRIO GETS BACK TO WORK...

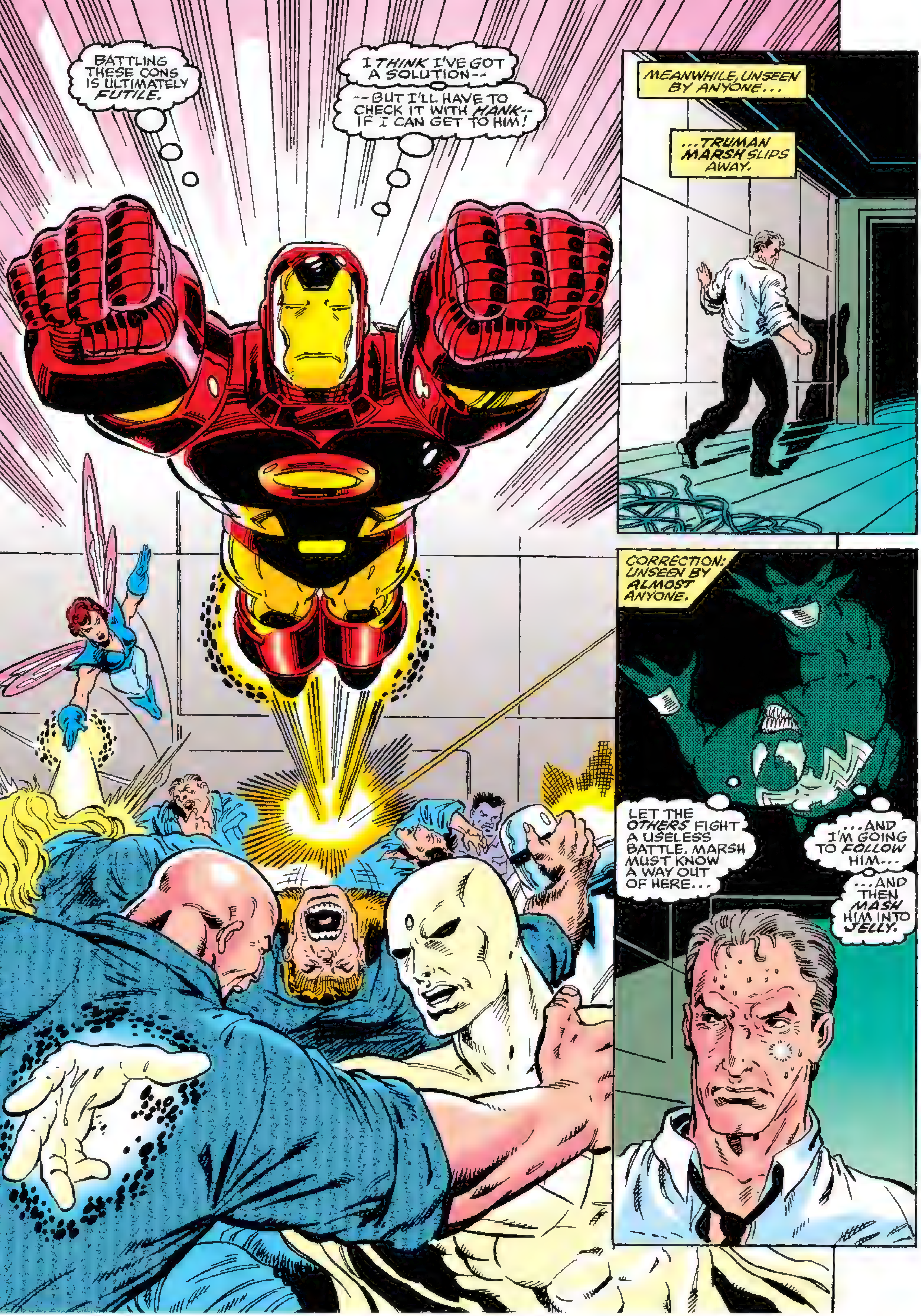

...THE TENSION IN THE ROOM--
01:06.24
--IN THE ENTIRE PRISON--
--IS STILL NIGH UN-BEARABLE.
A TOUCH OF ONE WRONG WIRE TO ANOTHER...
00:47.02
...A SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM THAT COMES A SECOND TOO LATE...
00:11.03
...COULD EASILY SPELL CATA-CLYSMIC DIS-ASTER.
GENTLEMEN--
--THE TURN OF THIS DIAL--
--WILL TELL IF WE LIVE OR DIE.
00:02.05

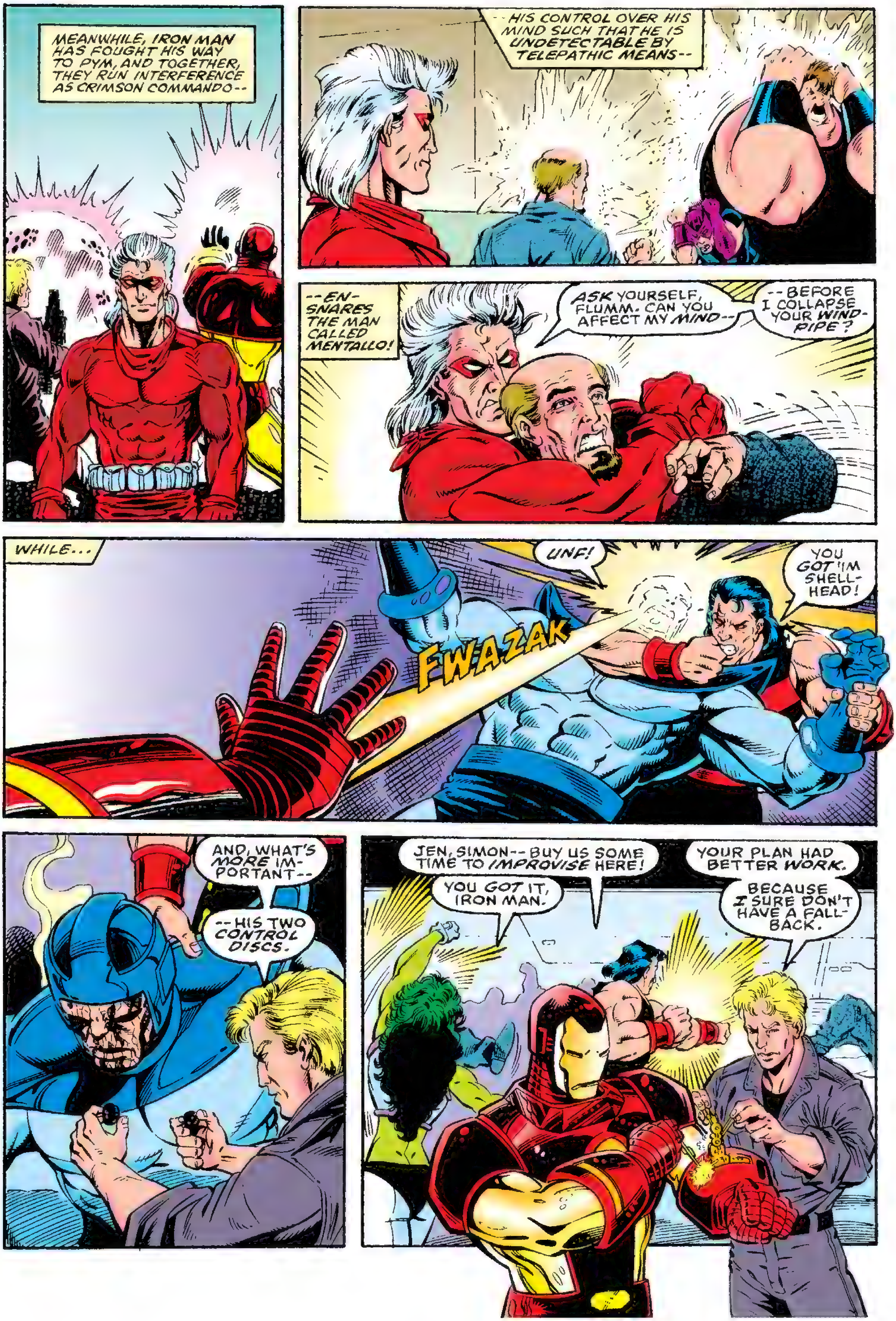
00:00.01 DOOMSDAY DEVICE: DISARMED
WE DID IT...
WE DID IT!
CONGRATULATIONS, FRANKLIN.
TO YOU, TOO, IRON MAN.
BUT... OUR ALLIES ARE STILL YOUR HOSTAGES.
I REGRET THAT, GENTLEMEN.
BUT THERE IS NO ROOM FOR SENTIMENT AT THIS HOUR.
WE ARE SAFE, MY FRIENDS.
WAY TO GO, THUNDERBALL!
MARSH--YOU LIED TO ME! TOLD ME THERE WASN'T ANY BOMB!
WE'RE GOING TO--
THUNDERBALL'S THE ONE WHO SAVED US!
HE'S THE ONE WHO OUGHTTA BE IN CHARGE!
THUNDERBALL? HE'S NOTHING!
I WOULD HAVE FOUND A WAY OUT OF ALL THIS!
THUNDERBALL'S NOTHING!
NOTHING!
UNNH! I'LL SHOVE THOSE WORDS DOWN YOUR GROTESQUE MAW, BROCK!
VENOM! FRANKLIN! LOOK--

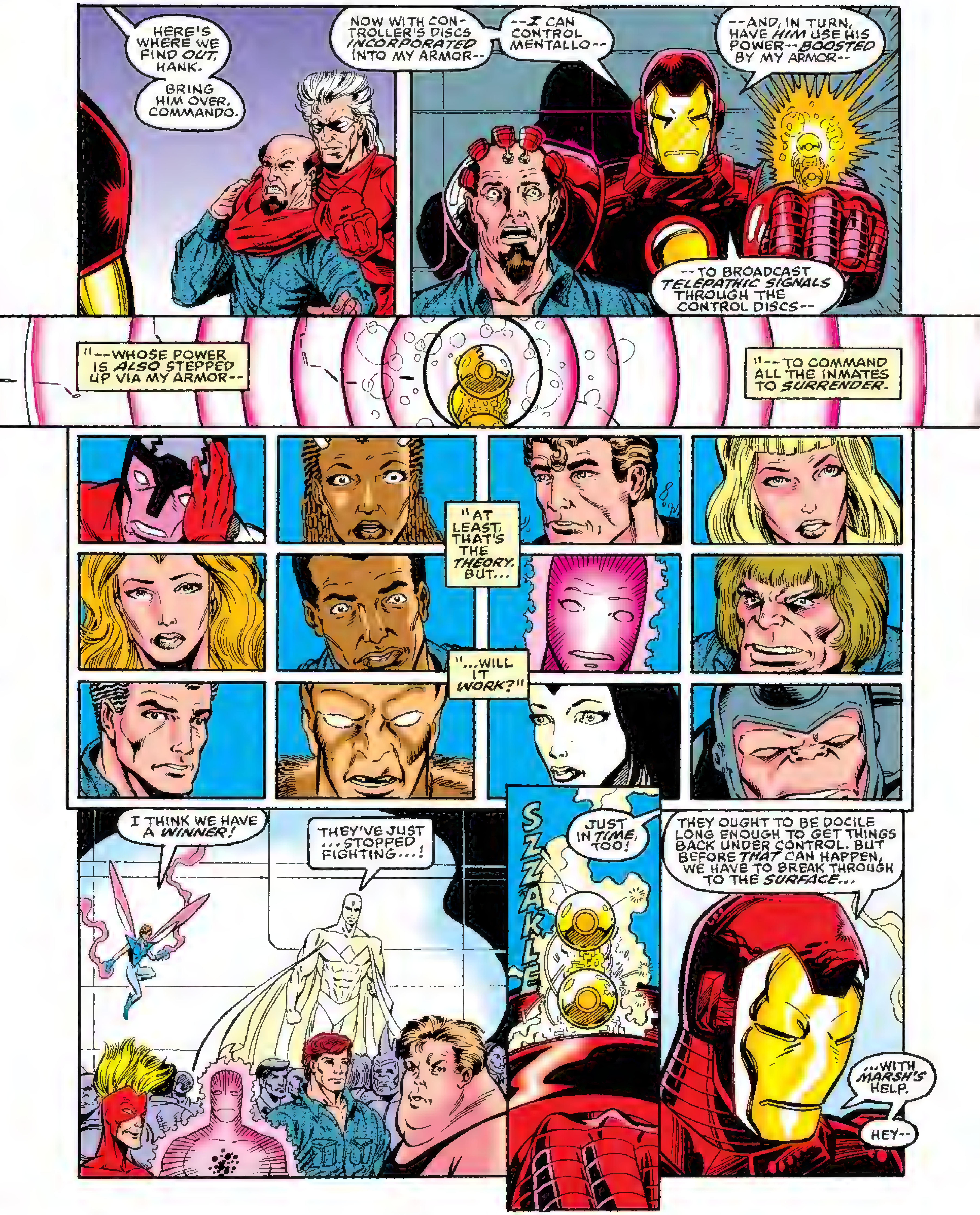

--COMING THIS WAY!
HOLY--!
THE VISION! HE'S FREE--!
AAGH!
UNHH!
NNGGGHH--!
NOW, FROM MINIMUM DENSITY--
--TO MAXIMUM!
YOU WERE SO BUSY IN HERE, KLAW, YOU LET THE SOUND CAGE I WAS IN WEAKEN.
ESCAPING IT, AND THAT BUFFOON, GOLIATH--WAS CHILD'S PLAY.
SPAKOW
OWWW--*
CAP! WITH KLAW OUT--OUR CAGE--
IT'S GONE.
AVENGERS--
--AND FREEDOM FORCE--
--ASSEMBLE!

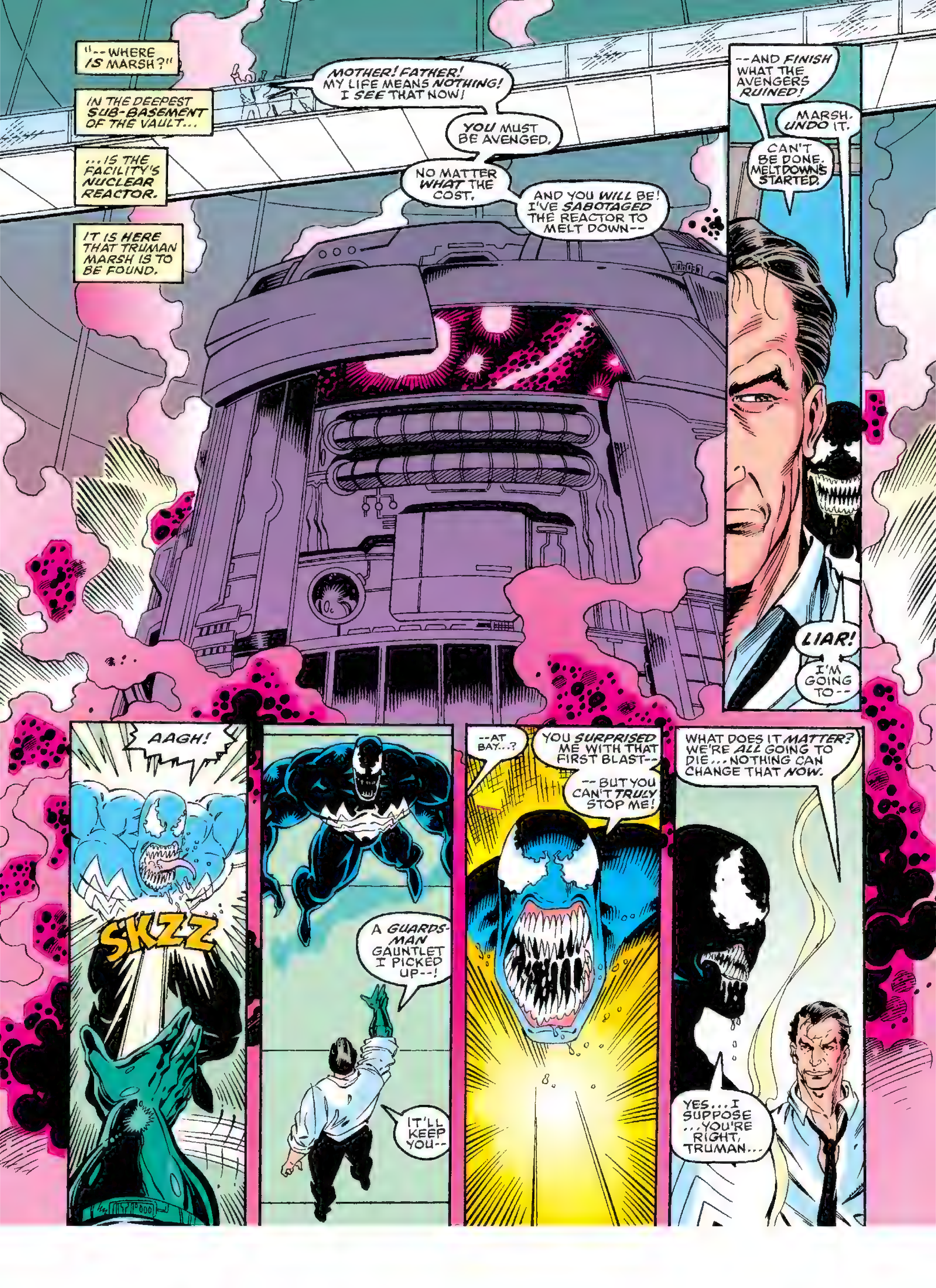

NOW *THIS* WAS WORTH ALMOST GETTIN' BLOWN UP FOR!
IT'S NOT OVER *YET*, BLOB. WE'RE *BADLY* OUT-NUMBERED.
THERE'RE A *THOUSAND WAYS* WE COULD STILL *DIE* DOWN HERE!
WE CAN'T THINK ABOUT *THAT*, JEN. WE'VE JUST GOT TO THINK ABOUT--

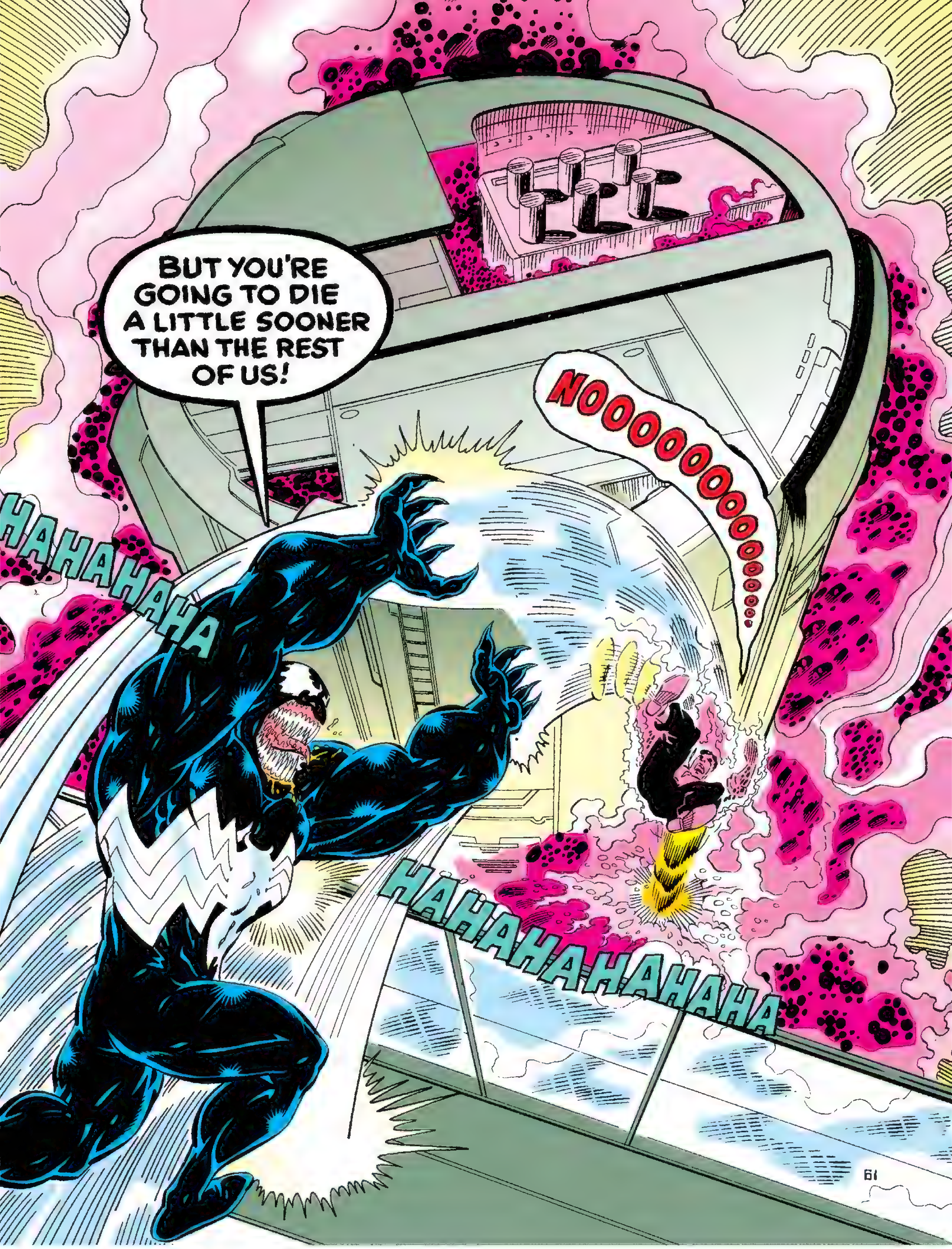

--PUTTING AN END TO THIS JAIL-BREAK NOW!!
KWAM
NICE TRY, X-RAY--
--BUT A LITTLE FIRE-RETARDANT FOAM CAN BLIND YOU AS WELL AS ANYBODY!
WE'RE FIGHTING AS HARD AS WE EVER HAVE--
--BUT THERE'S NO GETTING AROUND THEIR SHEER NUMBERS.
ARE WE DOOMED?

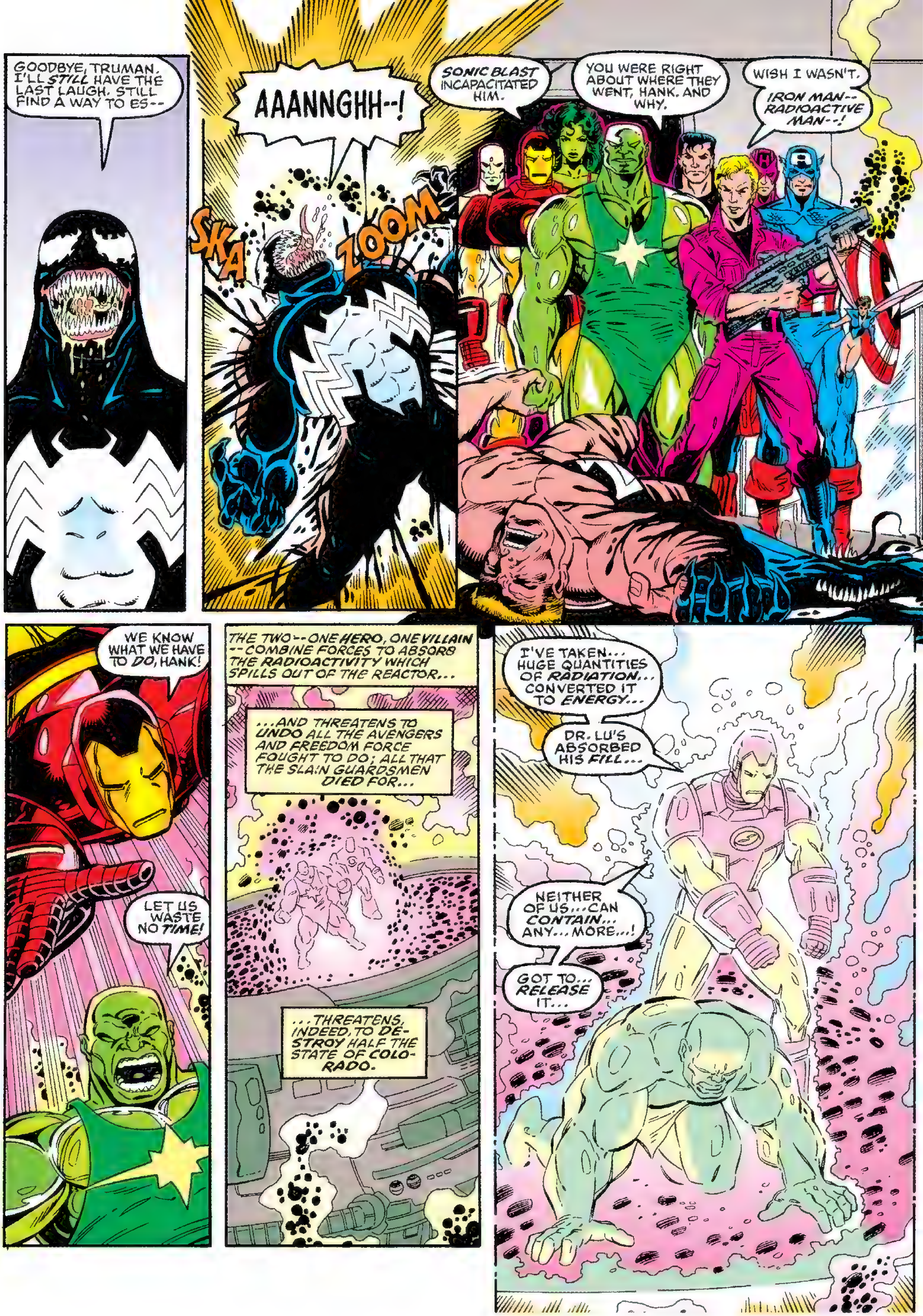

BATTLING THESE CONS IS ULTIMATELY *FUTILE.*
I *THINK* I'VE GOT A SOLUTION--
--BUT I'LL HAVE TO CHECK IT WITH *HANK*-- IF I CAN GET TO HIM!
MEANWHILE, UNSEEN BY ANYONE...
...*TRUMAN MARSH* SLIPS AWAY.
CORRECTION: UNSEEN BY *ALMOST* ANYONE.
LET THE *OTHERS* FIGHT A USELESS BATTLE. MARSH MUST KNOW A WAY OUT OF HERE...
...AND I'M GOING TO *FOLLOW* HIM...
...AND THEN *MASH* HIM INTO *JELLY.*

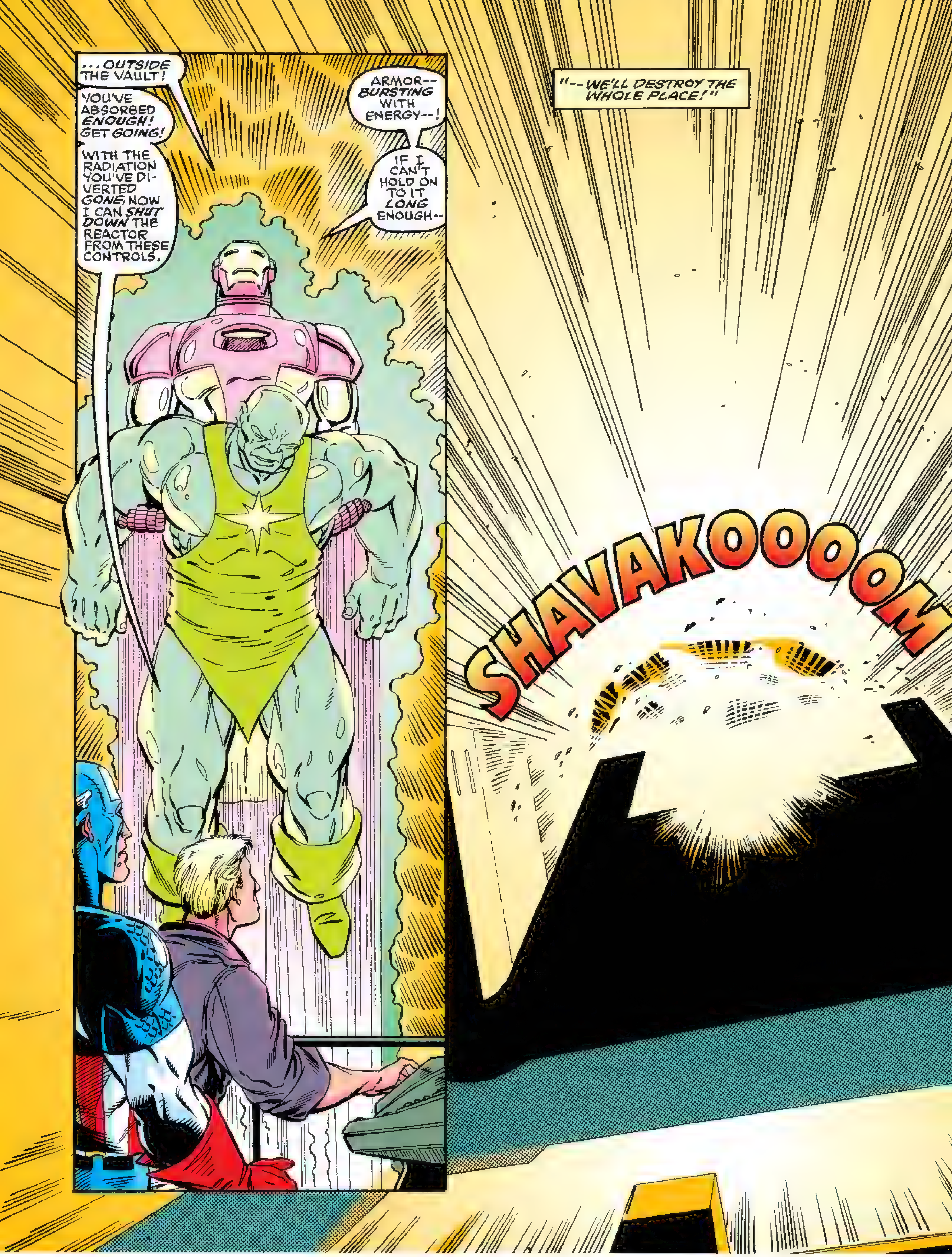

MEANWHILE, IRON MAN HAS FOUGHT HIS WAY TO PYM, AND TOGETHER, THEY RUN INTERFERENCE AS CRIMSON COMMANDO--
--HIS CONTROL OVER HIS MIND SUCH THAT HE IS UNDETECTABLE BY TELEPATHIC MEANS--
--ENSNARES THE MAN CALLED MENTALLO!
ASK YOURSELF, FLUMM. CAN YOU AFFECT MY MIND--
--BEFORE I COLLAPSE YOUR WINDPIPE?
WHILE...
UNF!
YOU GOT 'IM SHELLHEAD!
FWAZAK
AND, WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT--
--HIS TWO CONTROL DISCS.
JEN, SIMON-- BUY US SOME TIME TO IMPROVISE HERE!
YOU GOT IT, IRON MAN.
YOUR PLAN HAD BETTER WORK.
BECAUSE I SURE DON'T HAVE A FALLBACK.

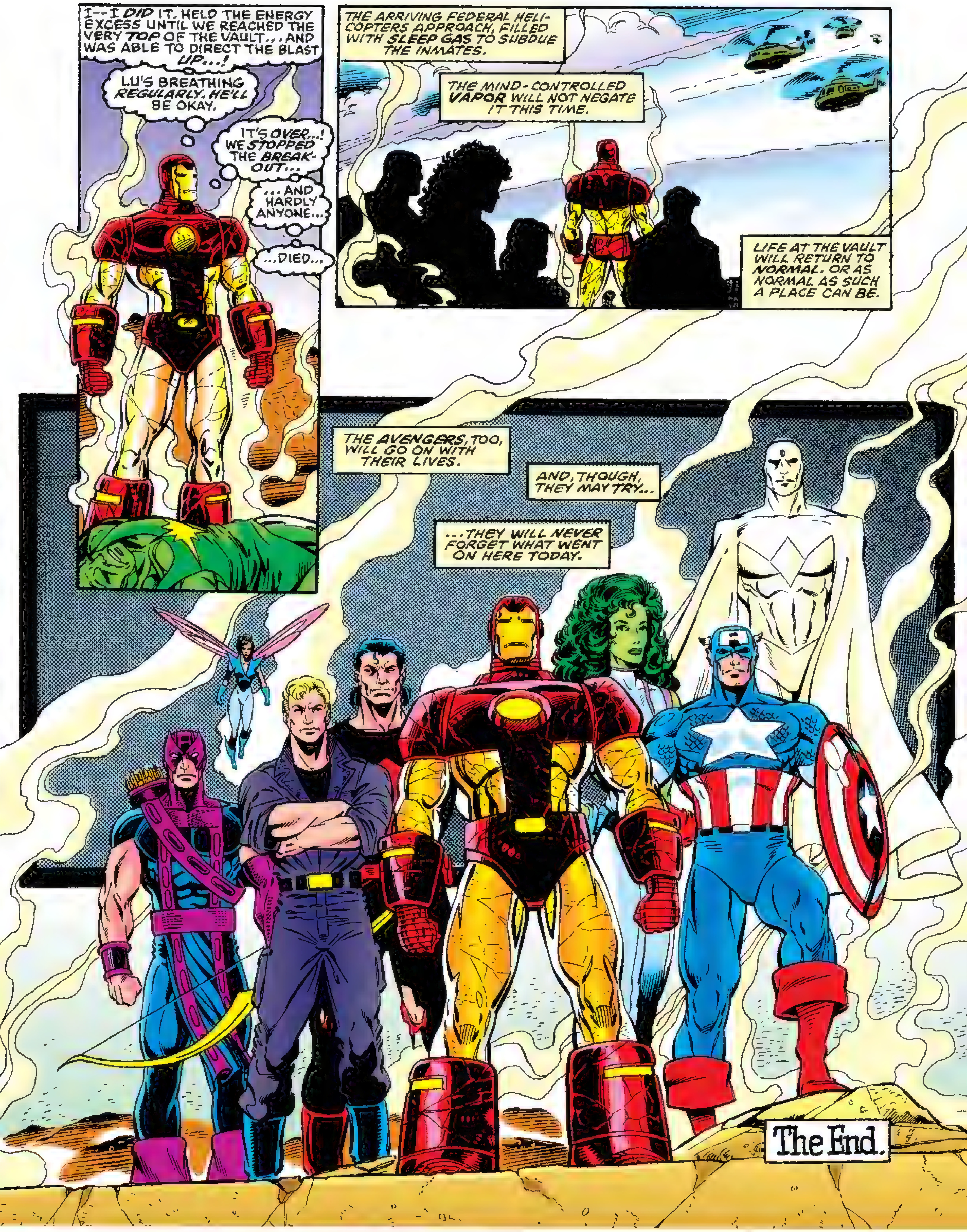

HERE'S WHERE WE FIND *OUT*, HANK.
BRING HIM OVER, COMMANDO.
NOW WITH CONTROLLER'S DISCS *INCORPORATED* INTO MY ARMOR--
--*I* CAN CONTROL MENTALLO--
--AND, IN TURN, HAVE *HIM* USE HIS POWER--*BOOSTED* BY MY ARMOR--
--TO BROADCAST *TELEPATHIC SIGNALS* THROUGH THE CONTROL DISCS--
"--WHOSE POWER IS *ALSO* STEPPED UP VIA MY ARMOR--
"--TO COMMAND ALL THE INMATES TO *SURRENDER*.
"AT LEAST, THAT'S THE *THEORY*. BUT...
"...WILL IT *WORK?*"
I THINK WE HAVE A *WINNER!*
THEY'VE JUST ...STOPPED FIGHTING...!
SZZAKLE
JUST IN *TIME*, TOO!
THEY OUGHT TO BE DOCILE LONG ENOUGH TO GET THINGS BACK UNDER CONTROL. BUT BEFORE *THAT* CAN HAPPEN, WE HAVE TO BREAK THROUGH TO THE *SURFACE*...
...WITH *MARSH'S* HELP.
HEY--

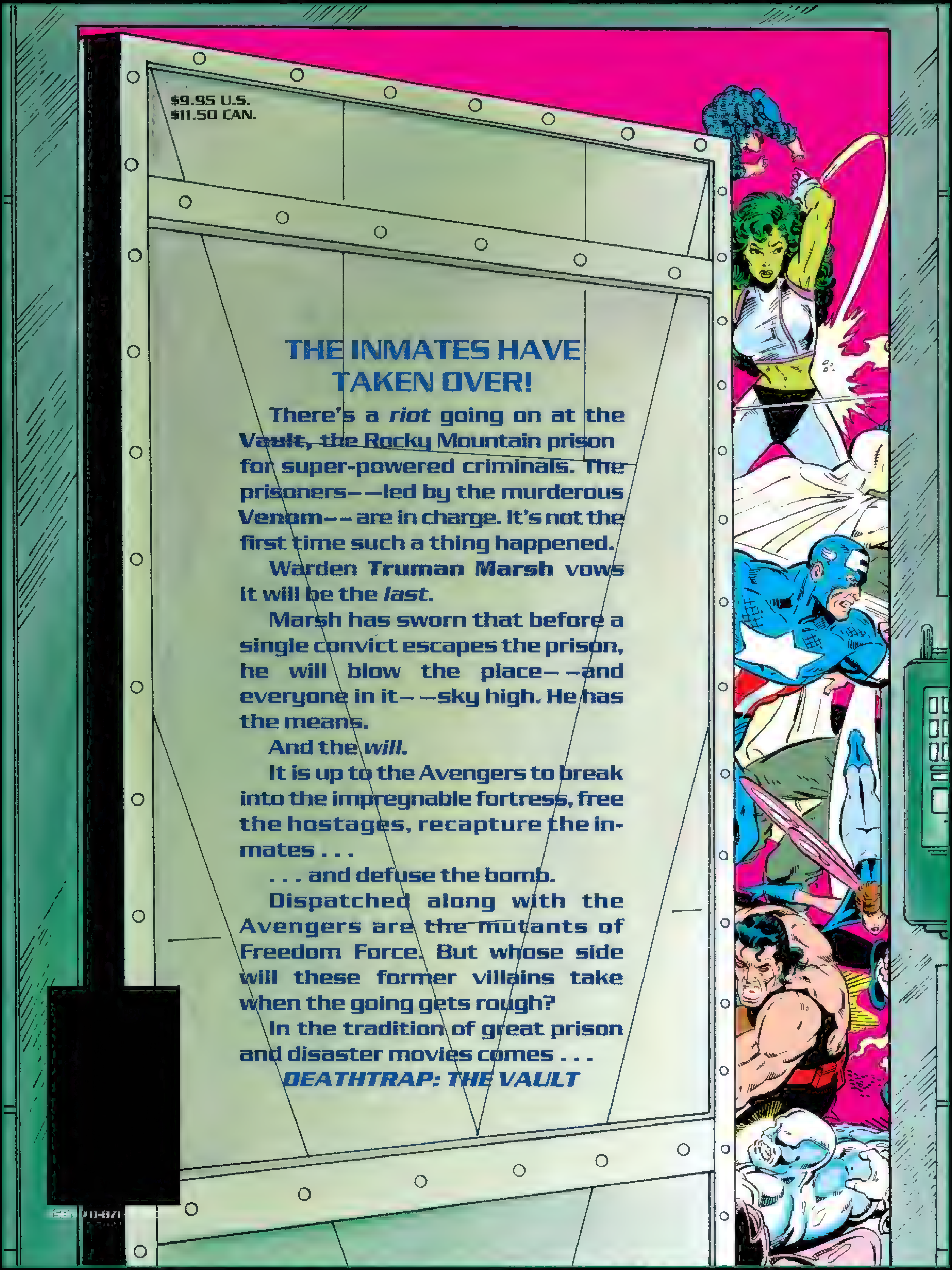

"--WHERE IS MARSH?"
IN THE DEEPEST SUB-BASEMENT OF THE VAULT...
...IS THE FACILITY'S NUCLEAR REACTOR.
IT IS HERE THAT TRUMAN MARSH IS TO BE FOUND.
MOTHER! FATHER! MY LIFE MEANS NOTHING! I SEE THAT NOW!
YOU MUST BE AVENGED.
NO MATTER WHAT THE COST.
AND YOU WILL BE! I'VE SABOTAGED THE REACTOR TO MELT DOWN--
--AND FINISH WHAT THE AVENGERS RUINED!
MARSH-- UNDO IT.
CAN'T BE DONE. MELTDOWN'S STARTED.
LIAR!
I'M GOING TO--
AAGH!
SKZZ
A GUARDSMAN GAUNTLET I PICKED UP--!
IT'LL KEEP YOU--
--AT BAY...?
YOU SURPRISED ME WITH THAT FIRST BLAST--
--BUT YOU CAN'T TRULY STOP ME!
WHAT DOES IT MATTER? WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE... NOTHING CAN CHANGE THAT NOW.
YES... I SUPPOSE... YOU'RE RIGHT, TRUMAN...


BUT YOU'RE GOING TO DIE A LITTLE SOONER THAN THE REST OF US!
NOOOOOOOOOOOOO
HAHAHAHAHA
HAHAHAHAHAHAHA


GOODBYE, TRUMAN. I'LL STILL HAVE THE LAST LAUGH. STILL FIND A WAY TO ES--
AAANNGHH--!
SKA
ZOOM
SONIC BLAST INCAPACITATED HIM.
YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT WHERE THEY WENT, HANK. AND WHY.
WISH I WASN'T.
IRON MAN-- RADIOACTIVE MAN--!
WE KNOW WHAT WE HAVE TO DO, HANK!
LET US WASTE NO TIME!
THE TWO--ONE HERO, ONE VILLAIN--COMBINE FORCES TO ABSORB THE RADIOACTIVITY WHICH SPILLS OUT OF THE REACTOR...
...AND THREATENS TO UNDO ALL THE AVENGERS AND FREEDOM FORCE FOUGHT TO DO; ALL THAT THE SLAIN GUARDSMEN DIED FOR...
...THREATENS, INDEED, TO DESTROY HALF THE STATE OF COLORADO.
I'VE TAKEN... HUGE QUANTITIES OF RADIATION... CONVERTED IT TO ENERGY...
DR. LU'S ABSORBED HIS FILL...
NEITHER OF US...CAN CONTAIN... ANY... MORE...!
GOT TO... RELEASE IT...


...OUTSIDE THE VAULT!
YOU'VE ABSORBED *ENOUGH!* GET *GOING!*
WITH THE RADIATION YOU'VE DIVERTED *GONE,* NOW I CAN *SHUT DOWN* THE REACTOR FROM THESE CONTROLS.
ARMOR-- *BURSTING* WITH ENERGY--!
IF I CAN'T HOLD ON TO IT *LONG* ENOUGH--
"--WE'LL DESTROY THE WHOLE PLACE!"
SHAVAKOOOOM


I-- I *DID* IT. HELD THE ENERGY EXCESS UNTIL WE REACHED THE VERY *TOP* OF THE VAULT... AND WAS ABLE TO DIRECT THE BLAST *UP*...!
LU'S BREATHING *REGULARLY. HE'LL* BE OKAY.
IT'S *OVER*...! WE *STOPPED* THE *BREAK-OUT*...
...AND HARDLY ANYONE...
...DIED...
THE ARRIVING FEDERAL HELICOPTERS APPROACH, FILLED WITH *SLEEP GAS* TO SUBDUE THE INMATES.
THE MIND-CONTROLLED *VAPOR* WILL NOT NEGATE IT THIS TIME.
LIFE AT THE VAULT WILL RETURN TO *NORMAL*. OR AS NORMAL AS SUCH A PLACE CAN BE.
THE *AVENGERS*, TOO, WILL GO ON WITH THEIR LIVES.
AND, THOUGH, THEY MAY *TRY*...
...THEY WILL NEVER FORGET WHAT WENT ON HERE TODAY.
The End.



$9.95 U.S.
$11.50 CAN.

THE INMATES HAVE TAKEN OVER!

There's a *riot* going on at the Vault, the Rocky Mountain prison for super-powered criminals. The prisoners—led by the murderous Venom—are in charge. It's not the first time such a thing happened.

Warden **Truman Marsh** vows it will be the *last*.

Marsh has sworn that before a single convict escapes the prison, he will blow the place—and everyone in it—sky high. He has the means.

And the *will*.

It is up to the Avengers to break into the impregnable fortress, free the hostages, recapture the inmates . . .

. . . and defuse the bomb.

Dispatched along with the Avengers are the mutants of Freedom Force. But whose side will these former villains take when the going gets rough?

In the tradition of great prison and disaster movies comes . . .

DEATHTRAP: THE VAULT

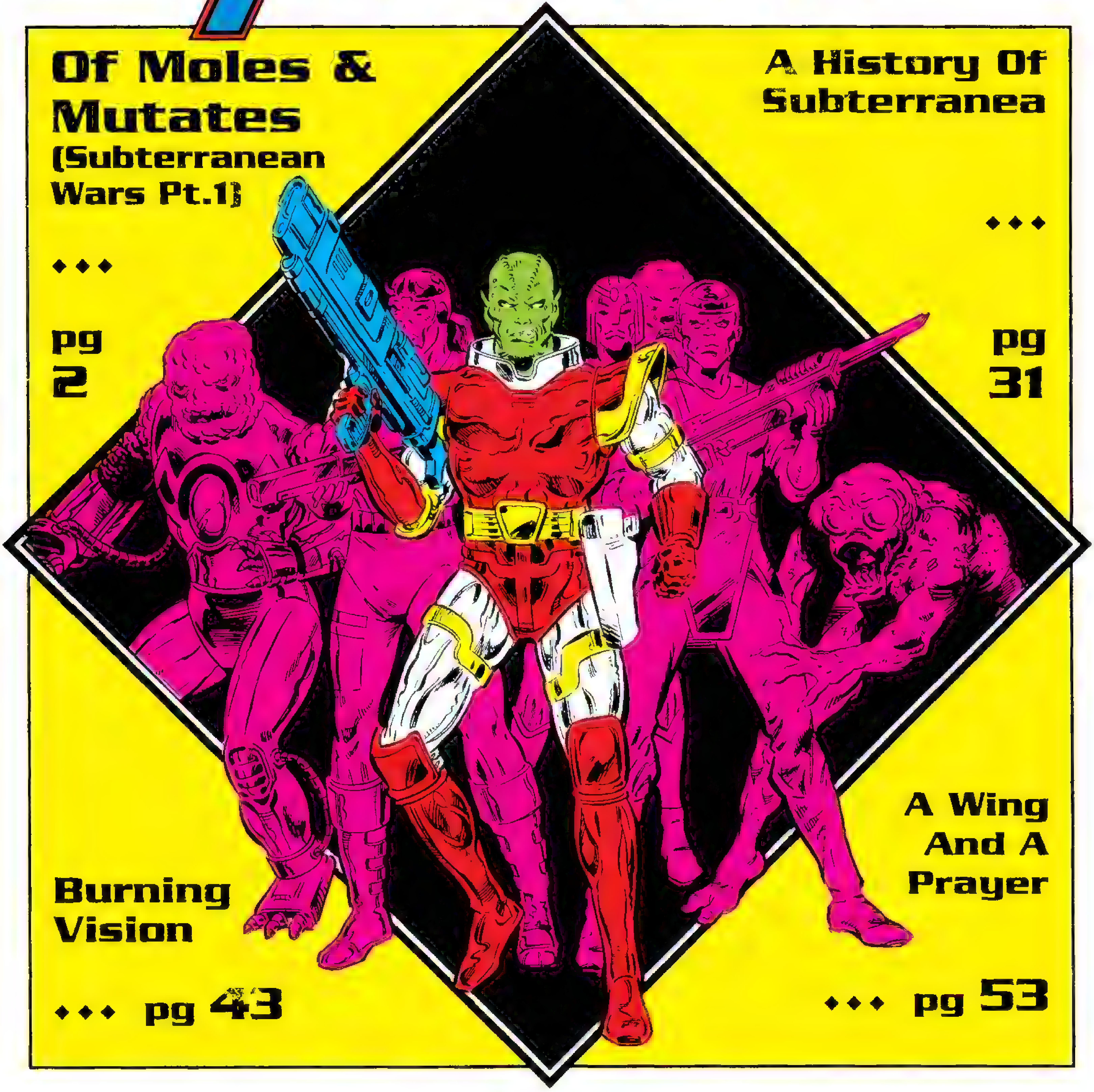
[redacted]

MARVEL® COMICS
ANNUAL
PART 1
SUBTERRANEAN WARS™
64 PAGES
$2.00/ $2.45 CAN.
AVENGERS
20♦1991
£1.00 UK
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
AVENGERS®
50 YEARS OF CAPTAIN AMERICA
1941 – 1991

SUBTERRANEAN WARS™
PART 1

FEATURING:

AVENGERS®

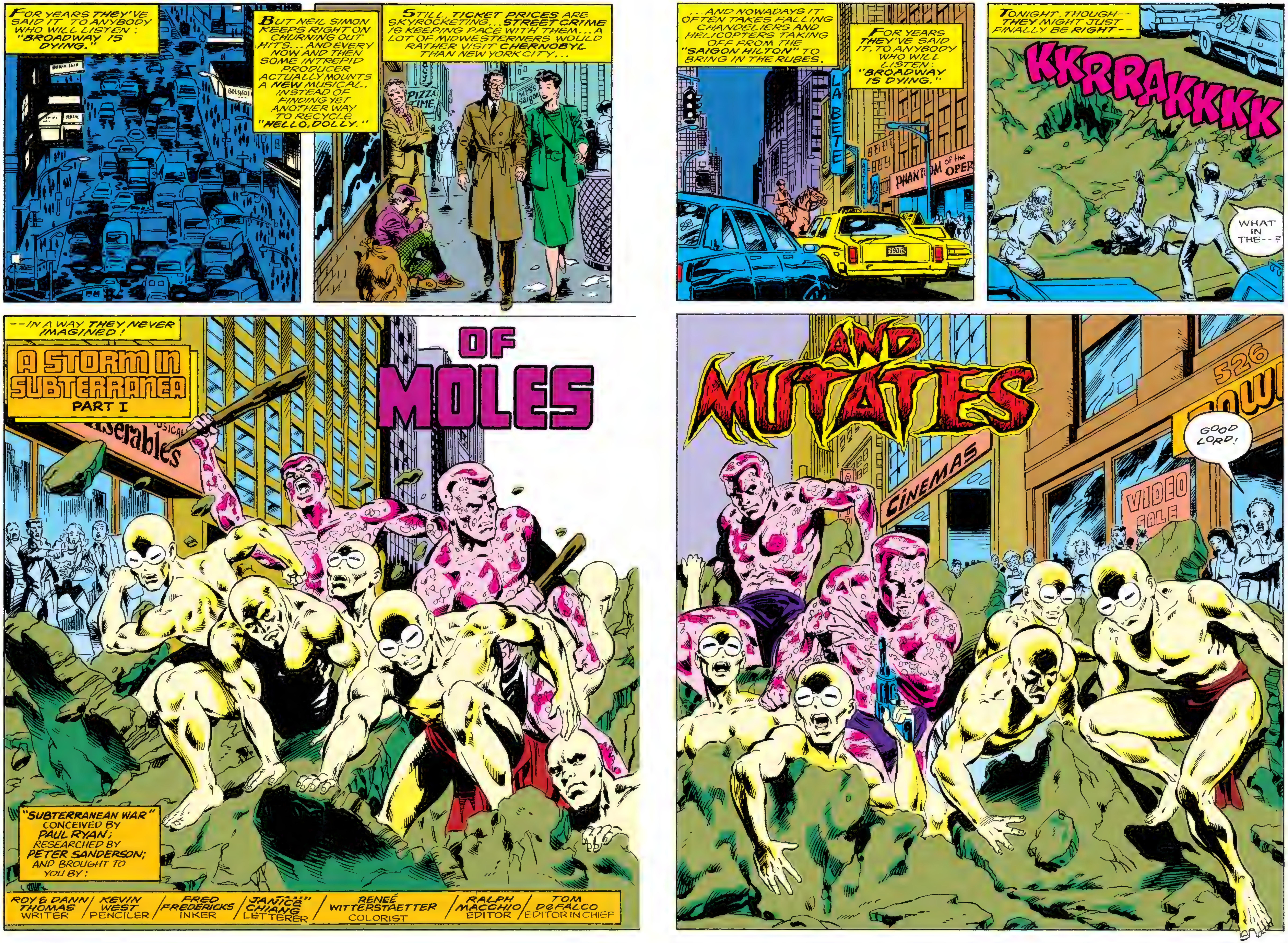


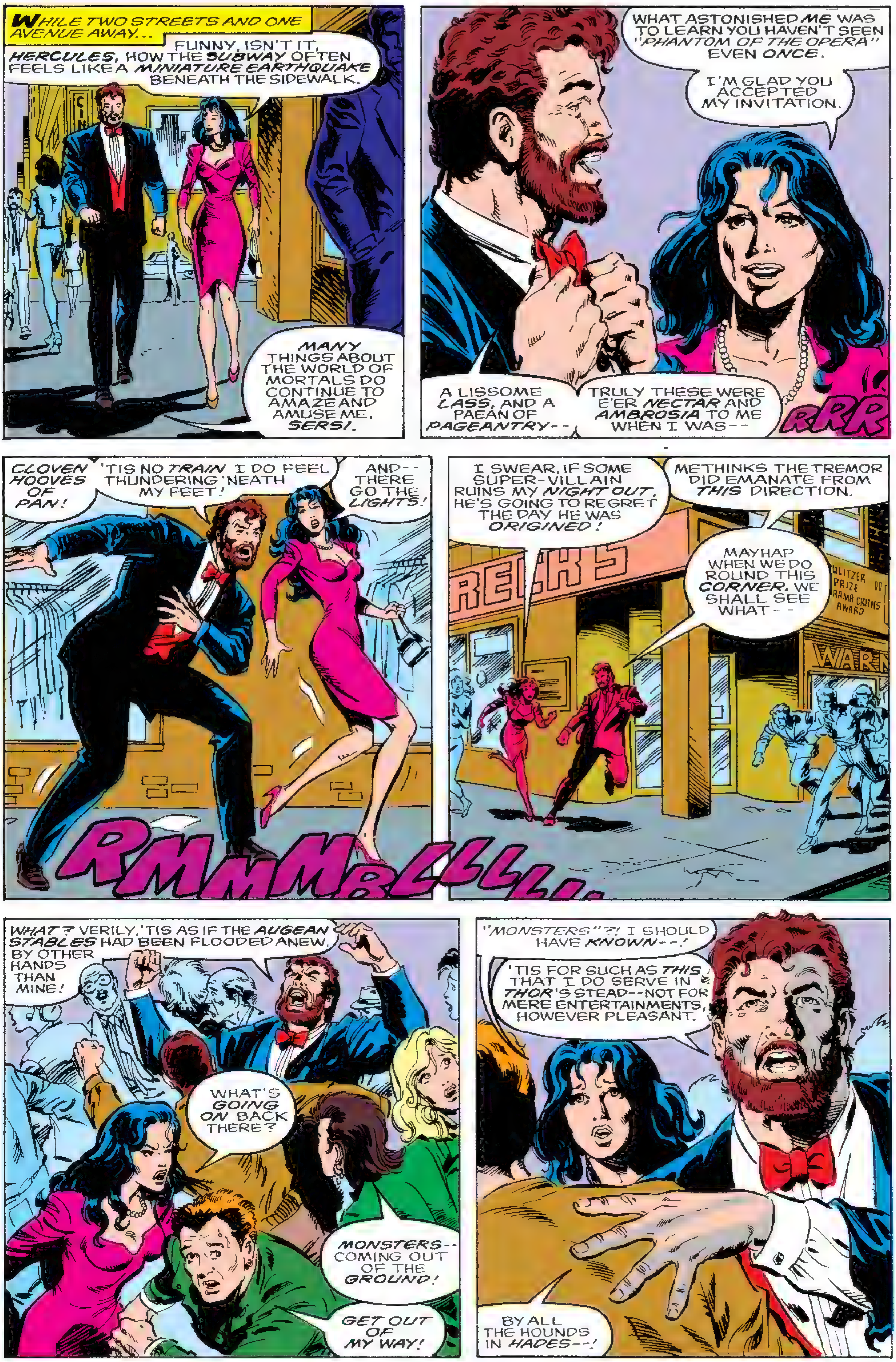
Of Moles & Mutates (Subterranean Wars Pt.1) ◆◆◆ pg 2

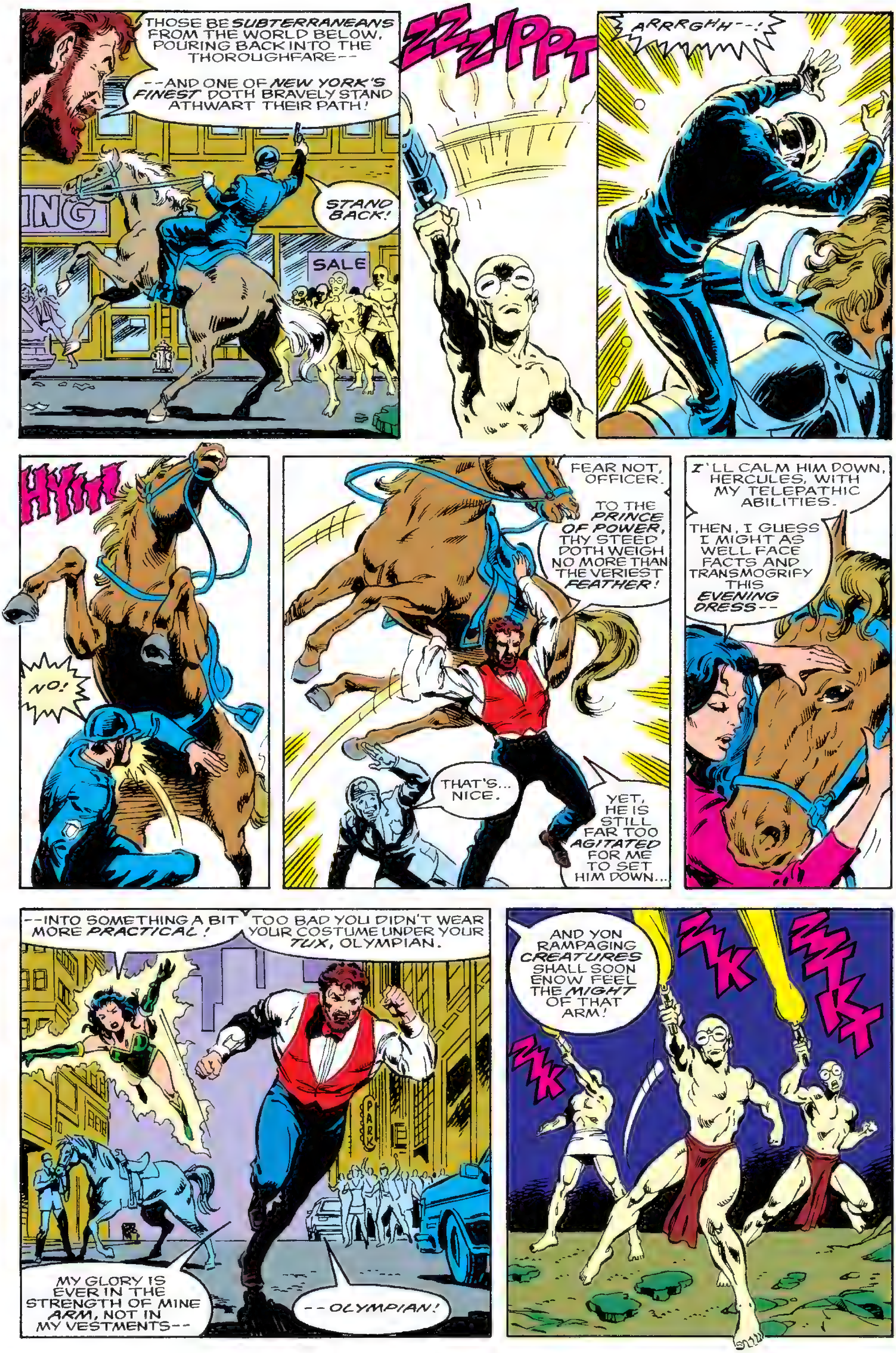
A History Of Subterranea ◆◆◆ pg 31

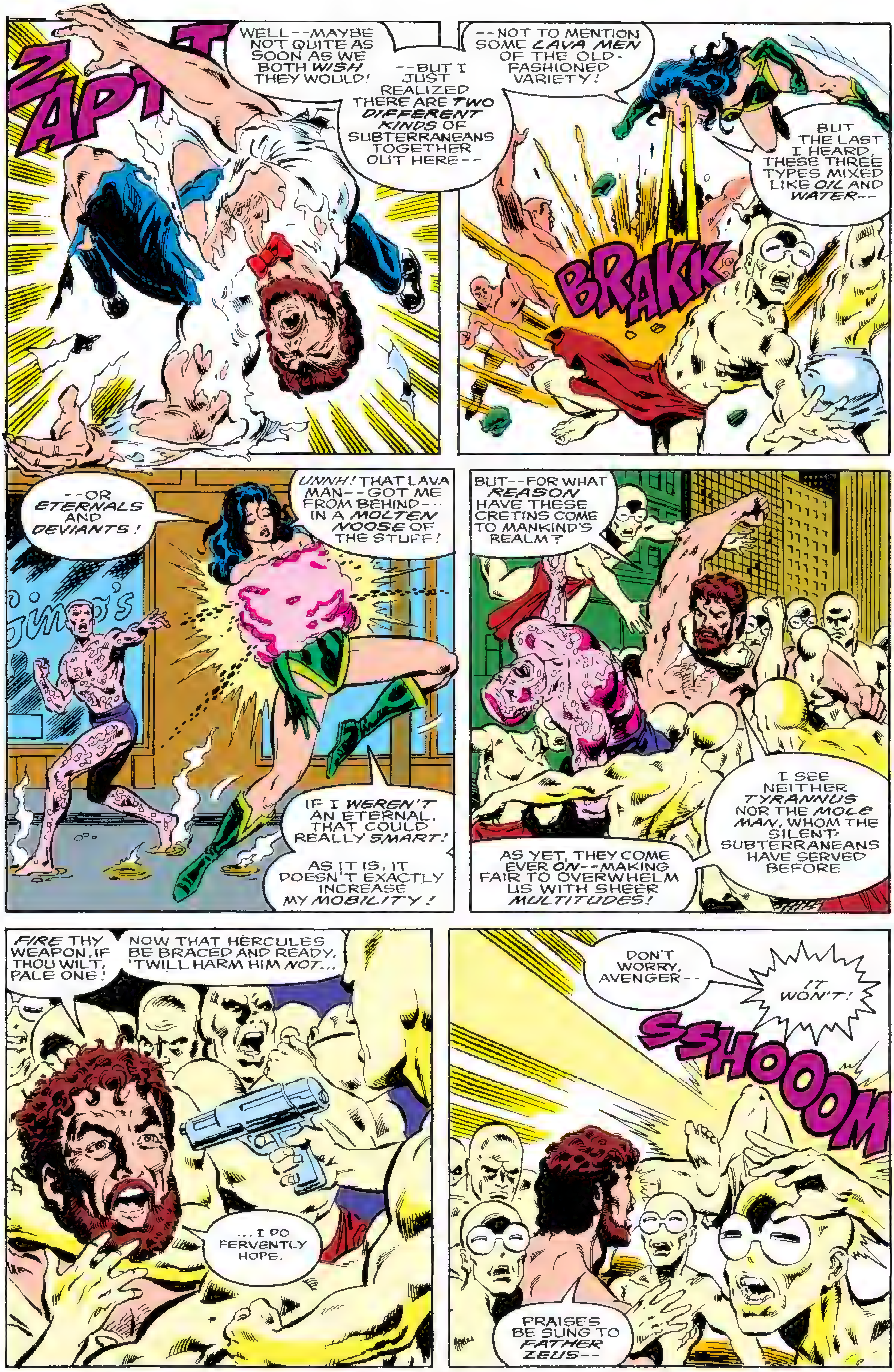
Burning Vision ◆◆◆ pg 43

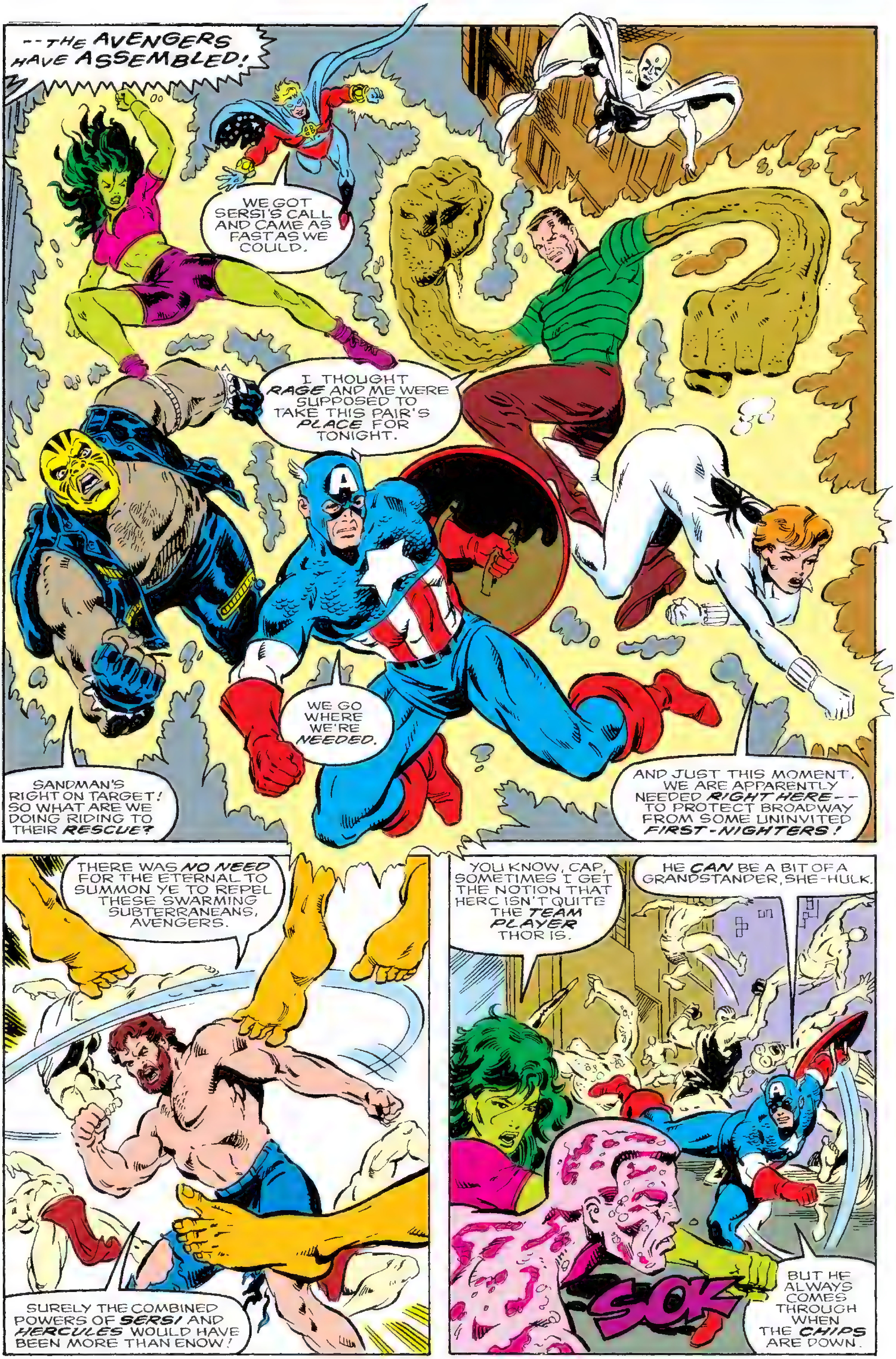
A Wing And A Prayer ◆◆◆ pg 53

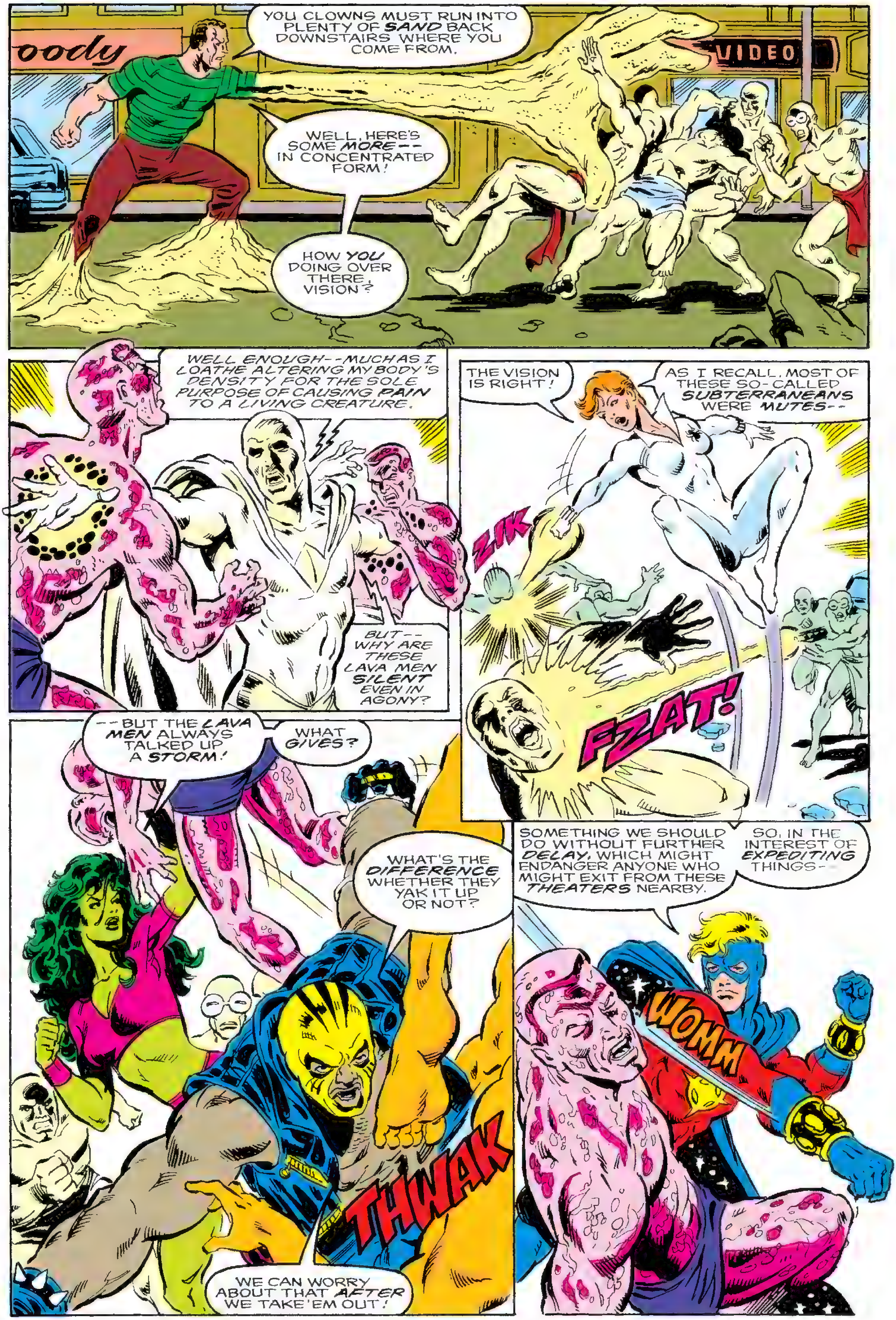

FOR YEARS THEY'VE SAID IT TO ANYBODY WHO WILL LISTEN : "BROADWAY IS DYING."
BOLSHOI
BUT NEIL SIMON KEEPS RIGHT ON CHURNING OUT HITS... AND EVERY NOW AND THEN SOME INTREPID PRODUCER ACTUALLY MOUNTS A NEW MUSICAL, INSTEAD OF FINDING YET ANOTHER WAY TO RECYCLE "HELLO, DOLLY."
STILL, TICKET PRICES ARE SKYROCKETING... STREET CRIME IS KEEPING PACE WITH THEM... A LOT OF MIDWESTERNERS WOULD RATHER VISIT CHERNOBYL THAN NEW YORK CITY...
PIZZA TIME
MISS Saigon
...AND NOWADAYS IT OFTEN TAKES FALLING CHANDELIERS AND HELICOPTERS TAKING OFF FROM THE "SAIGON HILTON" TO BRING IN THE RUBES.
FOR YEARS THEY'VE SAID IT, TO ANYBODY WHO WILL LISTEN: "BROADWAY IS DYING."
LA BETE
PHANTOM of the OPER
39013
TONIGHT, THOUGH-- THEY MIGHT JUST FINALLY BE RIGHT--
KKRRAKKKK
WHAT IN THE--?
--IN A WAY THEY NEVER IMAGINED!
A STORM IN SUBTERRANEA
PART I
OF MOLES
AND MUTATES
Miserables
CINEMAS
526
VIDEO SALE
GOOD LORD!
"SUBTERRANEAN WAR" CONCEIVED BY PAUL RYAN; RESEARCHED BY PETER SANDERSON; AND BROUGHT TO YOU BY:
ROY & DANN THOMAS WRITER / KEVIN WEST PENCILER / FRED FREDERICKS INKER / JANICE CHIANG LETTERER / RENEÉ WITTERSTAETTER COLORIST / RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR / TOM DeFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

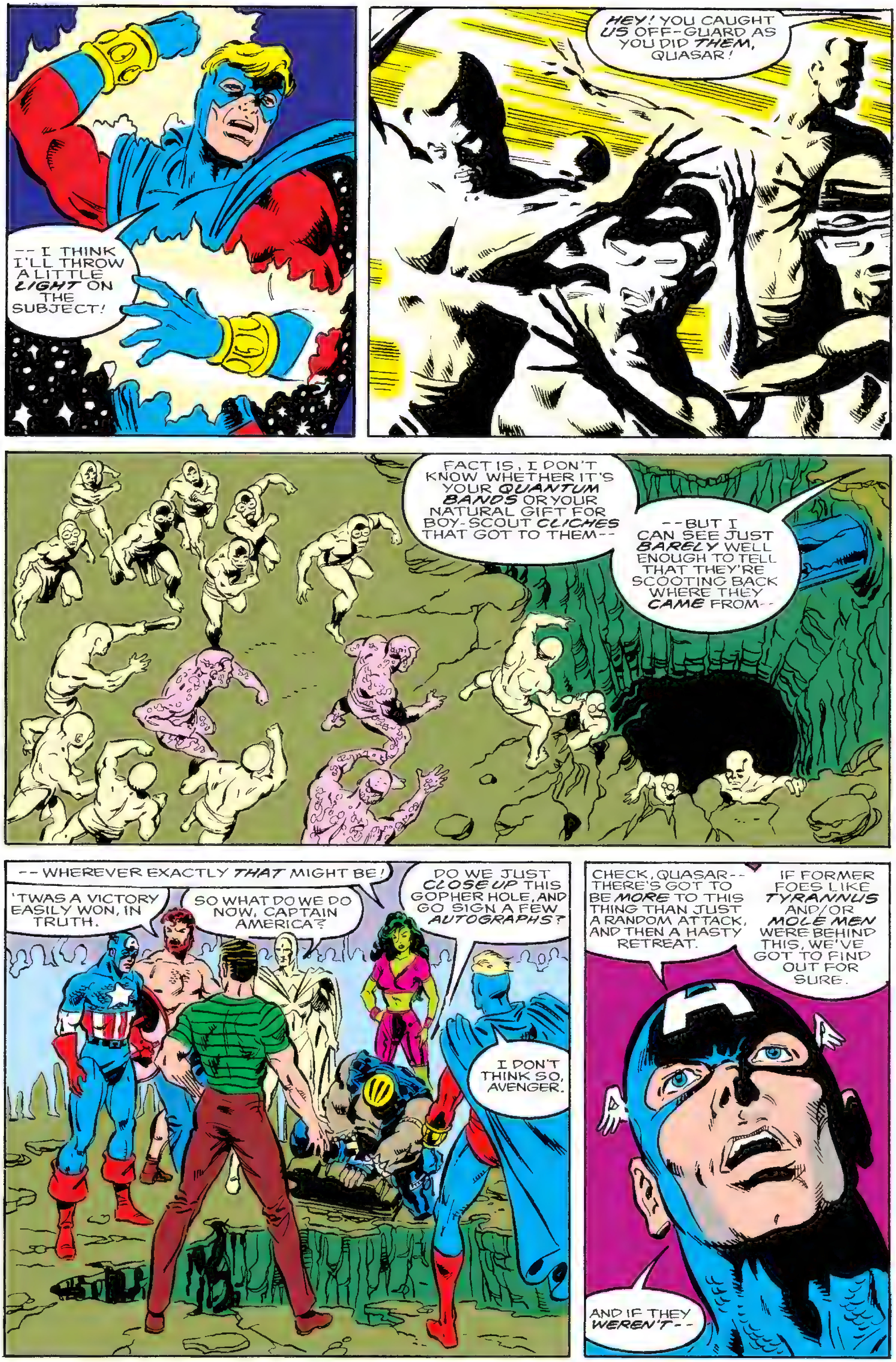

WHILE TWO STREETS AND ONE AVENUE AWAY...
FUNNY, ISN'T IT, HERCULES, HOW THE SUBWAY OFTEN FEELS LIKE A MINIATURE EARTHQUAKE BENEATH THE SIDEWALK.
MANY THINGS ABOUT THE WORLD OF MORTALS DO CONTINUE TO AMAZE AND AMUSE ME, SERSI.
WHAT ASTONISHED ME WAS TO LEARN YOU HAVEN'T SEEN "PHANTOM OF THE OPERA" EVEN ONCE.
I'M GLAD YOU ACCEPTED MY INVITATION.
A LISSOME LASS, AND A PAEAN OF PAGEANTRY--
TRULY THESE WERE E'ER NECTAR AND AMBROSIA TO ME WHEN I WAS--
RRR
CLOVEN HOOVES OF PAN!
'TIS NO TRAIN I DO FEEL THUNDERING 'NEATH MY FEET!
AND--THERE GO THE LIGHTS!
RMMMBLLLL..
I SWEAR, IF SOME SUPER-VILLAIN RUINS MY NIGHT OUT, HE'S GOING TO REGRET THE DAY HE WAS ORIGINED!
METHINKS THE TREMOR DID EMANATE FROM THIS DIRECTION.
MAYHAP WHEN WE DO ROUND THIS CORNER, WE SHALL SEE WHAT--
RECKS
PULITZER PRIZE DRAMA CRITICS AWARD
WARN
WHAT? VERILY, 'TIS AS IF THE AUGEAN STABLES HAD BEEN FLOODED ANEW, BY OTHER HANDS THAN MINE!
WHAT'S GOING ON BACK THERE?
MONSTERS--COMING OUT OF THE GROUND!
GET OUT OF MY WAY!
"MONSTERS"?! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN--!
'TIS FOR SUCH AS THIS THAT I DO SERVE IN THOR'S STEAD--NOT FOR MERE ENTERTAINMENTS, HOWEVER PLEASANT.
BY ALL THE HOUNDS IN HADES--!

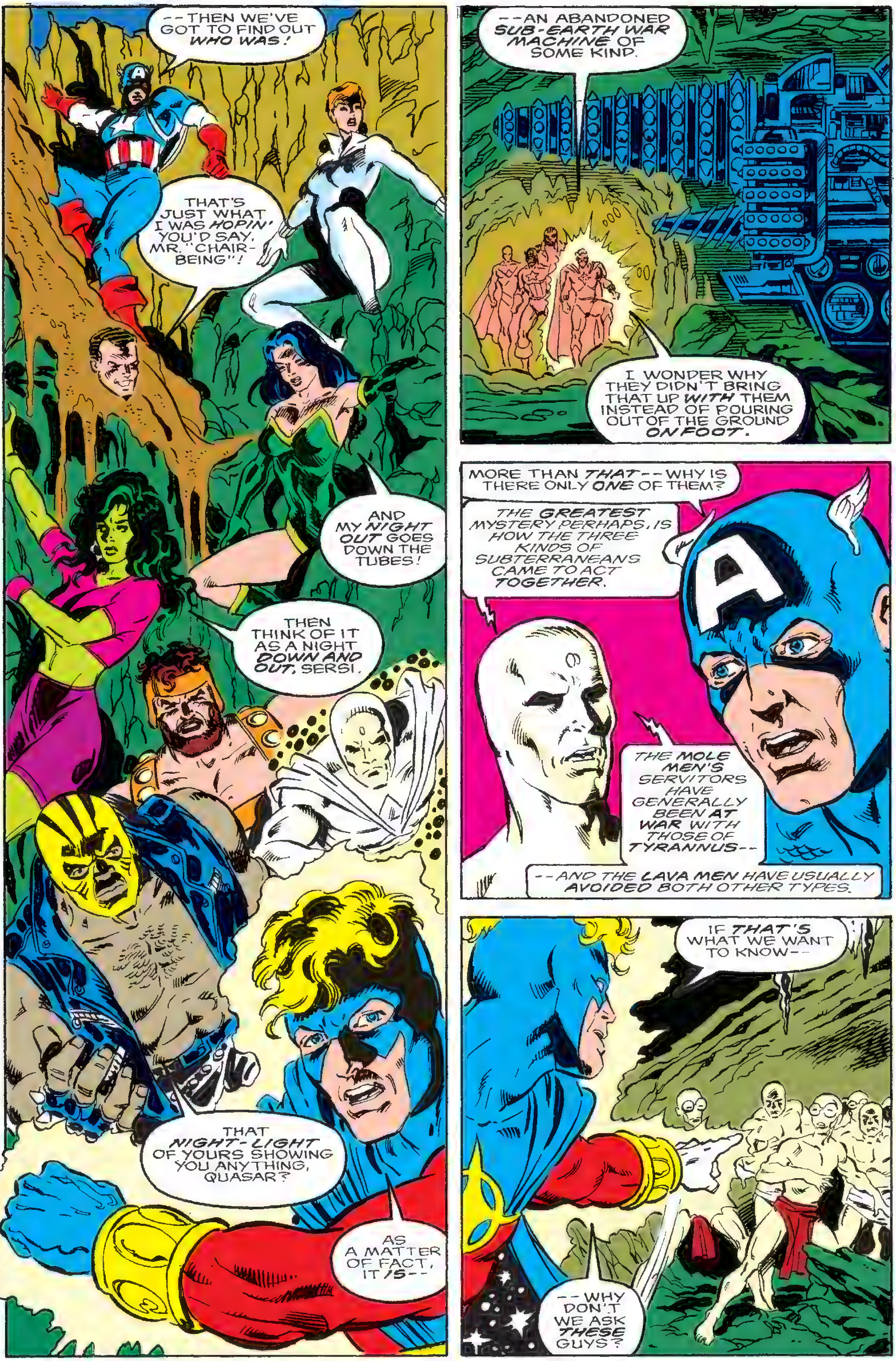

THOSE BE SUBTERRANEANS FROM THE WORLD BELOW, POURING BACK INTO THE THOROUGHFARE--
--AND ONE OF NEW YORK'S FINEST DOTH BRAVELY STAND ATHWART THEIR PATH!
ING
SALE
STAND BACK!
ZZZIPPT
ARRRGHH--!
HYIII
NO!
FEAR NOT, OFFICER.
TO THE PRINCE OF POWER, THY STEED DOTH WEIGH NO MORE THAN THE VERIEST FEATHER!
THAT'S... NICE.
YET, HE IS STILL FAR TOO AGITATED FOR ME TO SET HIM DOWN...
I'LL CALM HIM DOWN, HERCULES, WITH MY TELEPATHIC ABILITIES.
THEN, I GUESS I MIGHT AS WELL FACE FACTS AND TRANSMOGRIFY THIS EVENING DRESS--
--INTO SOMETHING A BIT MORE PRACTICAL!
TOO BAD YOU DIDN'T WEAR YOUR COSTUME UNDER YOUR TUX, OLYMPIAN.
PARK
MY GLORY IS EVER IN THE STRENGTH OF MINE ARM, NOT IN MY VESTMENTS--
--OLYMPIAN!
AND YON RAMPAGING CREATURES SHALL SOON ENOW FEEL THE MIGHT OF THAT ARM!
ZAK
ZAK
ZZAKT

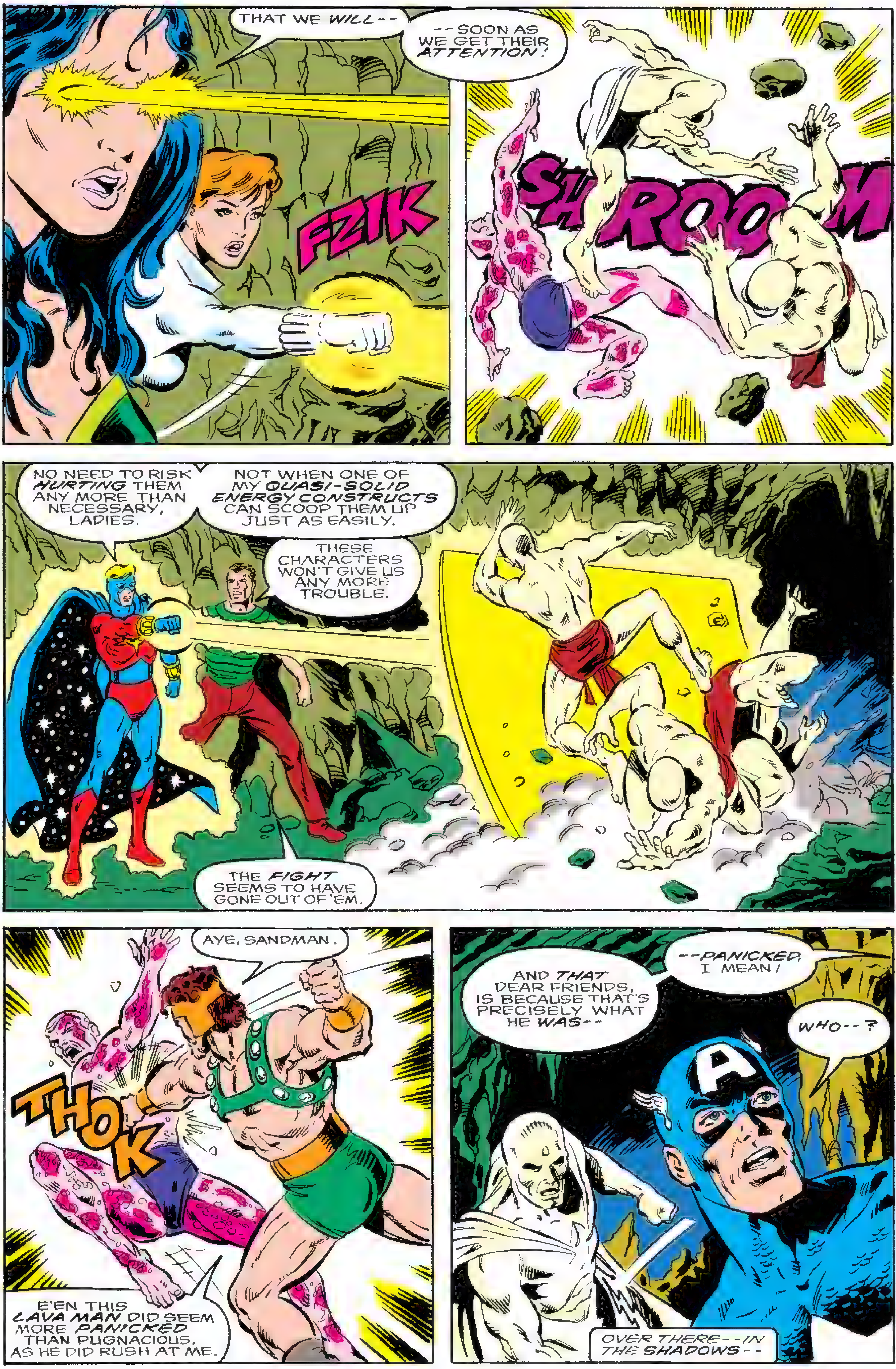

ZAPT
WELL--MAYBE NOT QUITE AS SOON AS WE BOTH *WISH* THEY WOULD!
--BUT I JUST REALIZED THERE ARE *TWO DIFFERENT KINDS* OF SUBTERRANEANS TOGETHER OUT HERE--
--NOT TO MENTION SOME *LAVA MEN* OF THE OLD-FASHIONED VARIETY!
BUT THE LAST I HEARD, THESE THREE TYPES MIXED LIKE *OIL* AND *WATER*--
BRAKK
--OR *ETERNALS* AND *DEVIANTS!*
UNNH! THAT LAVA MAN--GOT ME FROM BEHIND--IN A *MOLTEN NOOSE* OF THE STUFF!
IF I *WEREN'T* AN ETERNAL, THAT COULD REALLY *SMART!*
AS IT IS, IT DOESN'T EXACTLY INCREASE MY *MOBILITY!*
BUT--FOR WHAT *REASON* HAVE THESE CRETINS COME TO MANKIND'S REALM?
I SEE NEITHER *TYRANNUS* NOR THE *MOLE MAN*, WHOM THE SILENT SUBTERRANEANS HAVE SERVED BEFORE.
AS YET, THEY COME EVER *ON*--MAKING FAIR TO OVERWHELM US WITH SHEER *MULTITUDES!*
FIRE THY WEAPON, IF THOU WILT, PALE ONE!
NOW THAT HERCULES BE BRACED AND READY, 'TWILL HARM HIM *NOT*...
...I DO FERVENTLY HOPE.
DON'T WORRY, AVENGER--
IT WON'T!
SSHOOOM
PRAISES BE SUNG TO *FATHER ZEUS*--

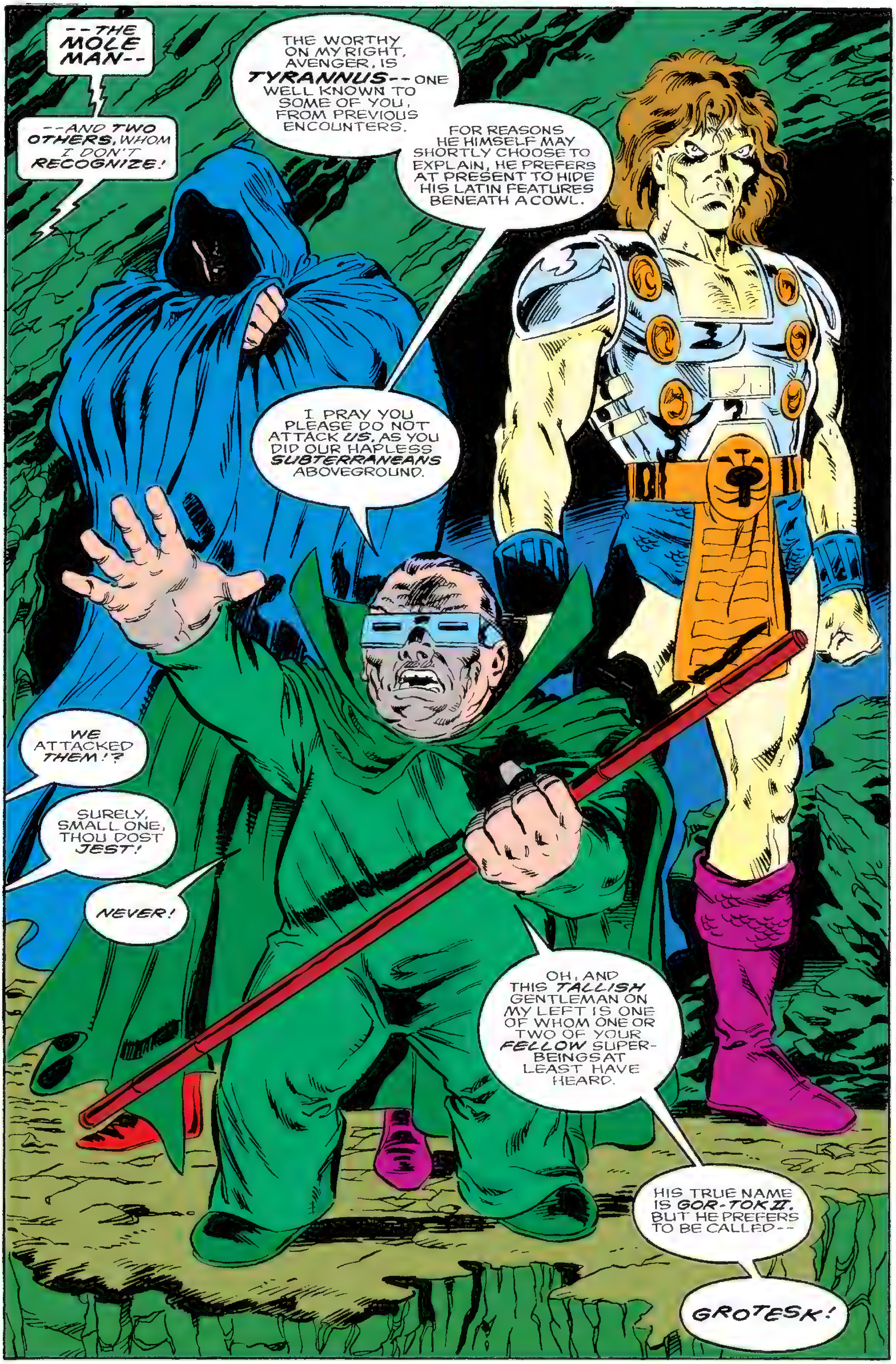

--THE AVENGERS HAVE ASSEMBLED!
WE GOT SERSI'S CALL AND CAME AS FAST AS WE COULD.
I THOUGHT *RAGE* AND ME WERE SUPPOSED TO TAKE THIS PAIR'S *PLACE* FOR TONIGHT.
WE GO WHERE WE'RE *NEEDED*.
SANDMAN'S RIGHT ON TARGET! SO WHAT ARE WE DOING RIDING TO THEIR *RESCUE?*
AND JUST THIS MOMENT, WE ARE APPARENTLY NEEDED *RIGHT HERE*-- TO PROTECT BROADWAY FROM SOME UNINVITED *FIRST-NIGHTERS!*
THERE WAS *NO NEED* FOR THE ETERNAL TO SUMMON YE TO REPEL THESE SWARMING SUBTERRANEANS, AVENGERS.
SURELY THE COMBINED POWERS OF *SERSI* AND *HERCULES* WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE THAN ENOW!
YOU KNOW, CAP, SOMETIMES I GET THE NOTION THAT HERC ISN'T QUITE THE *TEAM PLAYER* THOR IS.
HE *CAN* BE A BIT OF A GRANDSTANDER, SHE-HULK.
SOK
BUT HE ALWAYS COMES THROUGH WHEN THE *CHIPS* ARE DOWN.

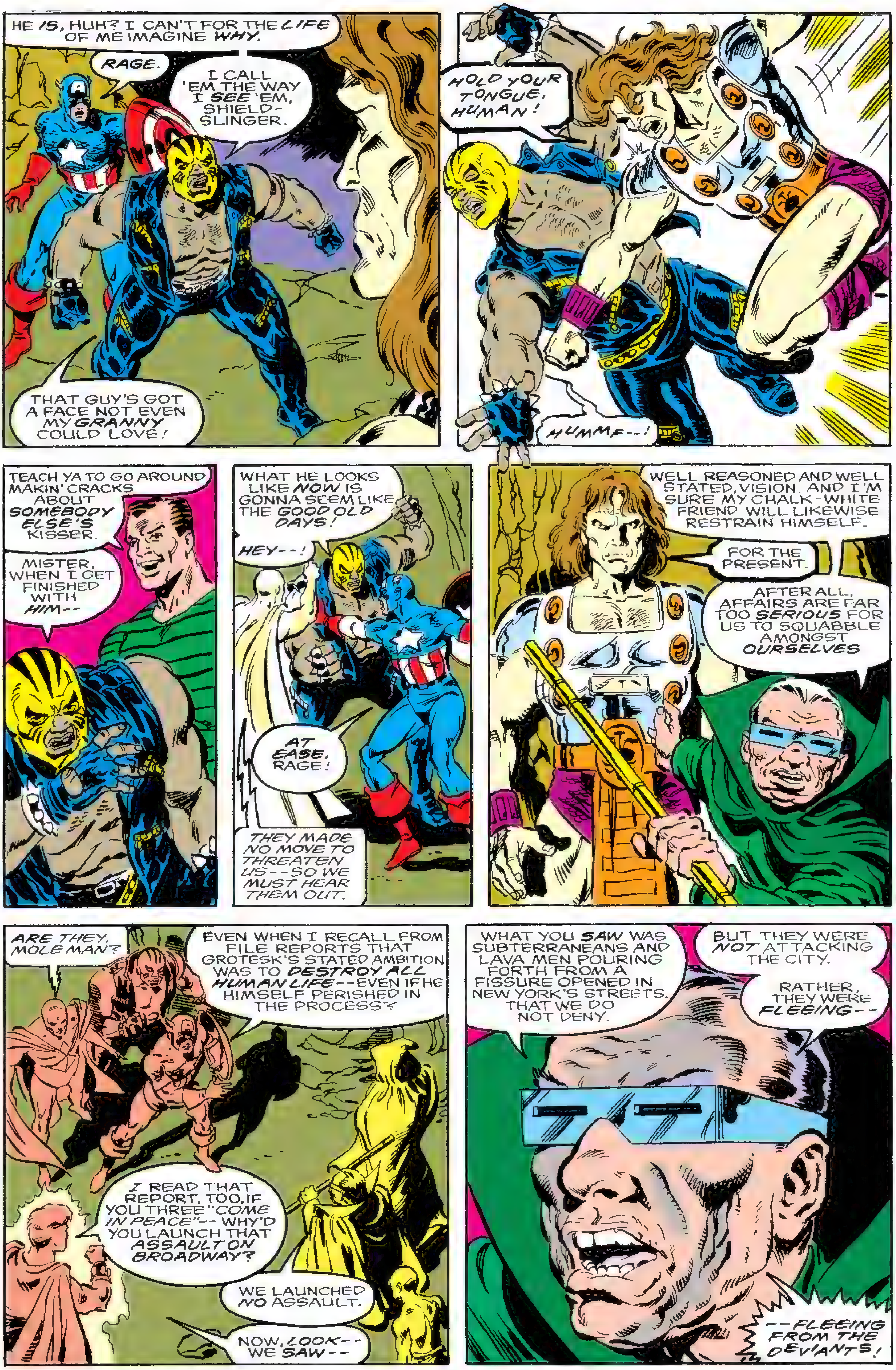

oody
VIDEO
YOU CLOWNS MUST RUN INTO PLENTY OF SAND BACK DOWNSTAIRS WHERE YOU COME FROM.
WELL, HERE'S SOME MORE-- IN CONCENTRATED FORM!
HOW YOU DOING OVER THERE, VISION?
WELL ENOUGH--MUCH AS I LOATHE ALTERING MY BODY'S DENSITY FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF CAUSING PAIN TO A LIVING CREATURE.
BUT--WHY ARE THESE LAVA MEN SILENT EVEN IN AGONY?
THE VISION IS RIGHT!
AS I RECALL, MOST OF THESE SO-CALLED SUBTERRANEANS WERE MUTES--
ZIK
FZAT!
--BUT THE LAVA MEN ALWAYS TALKED UP A STORM!
WHAT GIVES?
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE WHETHER THEY YAK IT UP OR NOT?
THWAK
WE CAN WORRY ABOUT THAT AFTER WE TAKE 'EM OUT!
SOMETHING WE SHOULD DO WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY, WHICH MIGHT ENDANGER ANYONE WHO MIGHT EXIT FROM THESE THEATERS NEARBY.
SO, IN THE INTEREST OF EXPEDITING THINGS--
WOMM

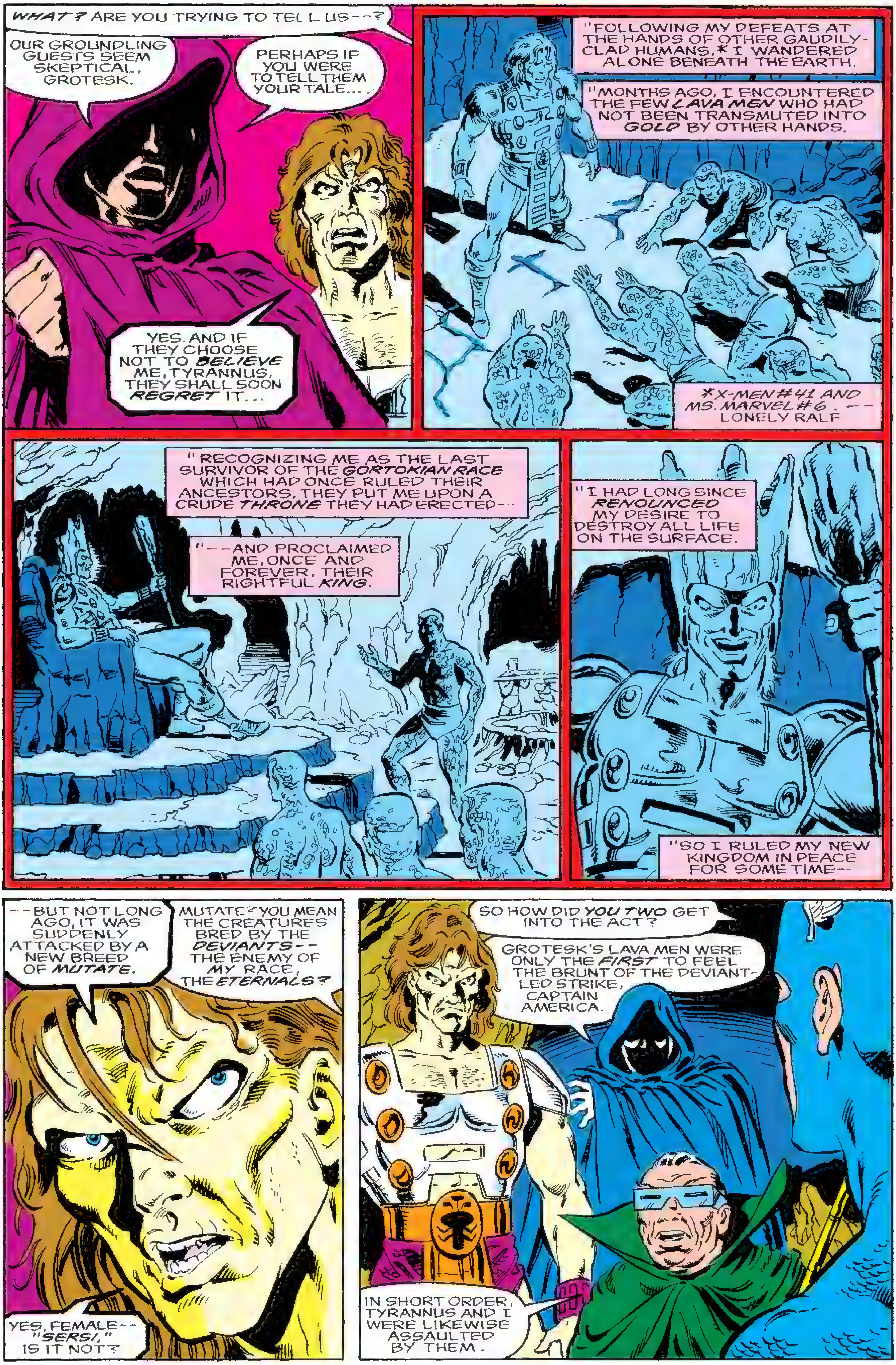

-- I THINK I'LL THROW A LITTLE *LIGHT* ON THE SUBJECT!
HEY! YOU CAUGHT *US* OFF-GUARD AS YOU DID *THEM*, QUASAR!
FACT IS, I DON'T KNOW WHETHER IT'S YOUR *QUANTUM BANDS* OR YOUR NATURAL GIFT FOR BOY-SCOUT *CLICHES* THAT GOT TO THEM--
--BUT I CAN SEE JUST *BARELY* WELL ENOUGH TO TELL THAT THEY'RE SCOOTING BACK WHERE THEY *CAME* FROM--
-- WHEREVER EXACTLY *THAT* MIGHT BE!
'TWAS A VICTORY EASILY WON, IN TRUTH.
SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW, CAPTAIN AMERICA?
DO WE JUST *CLOSE UP* THIS GOPHER HOLE, AND GO SIGN A FEW *AUTOGRAPHS?*
I DON'T THINK SO, AVENGER.
CHECK, QUASAR-- THERE'S GOT TO BE *MORE* TO THIS THING THAN JUST A RANDOM ATTACK, AND THEN A HASTY RETREAT.
IF FORMER FOES LIKE *TYRANNUS* AND/OR *MOLE MEN* WERE BEHIND THIS, WE'VE GOT TO FIND OUT FOR SURE.
AND IF THEY *WEREN'T*--

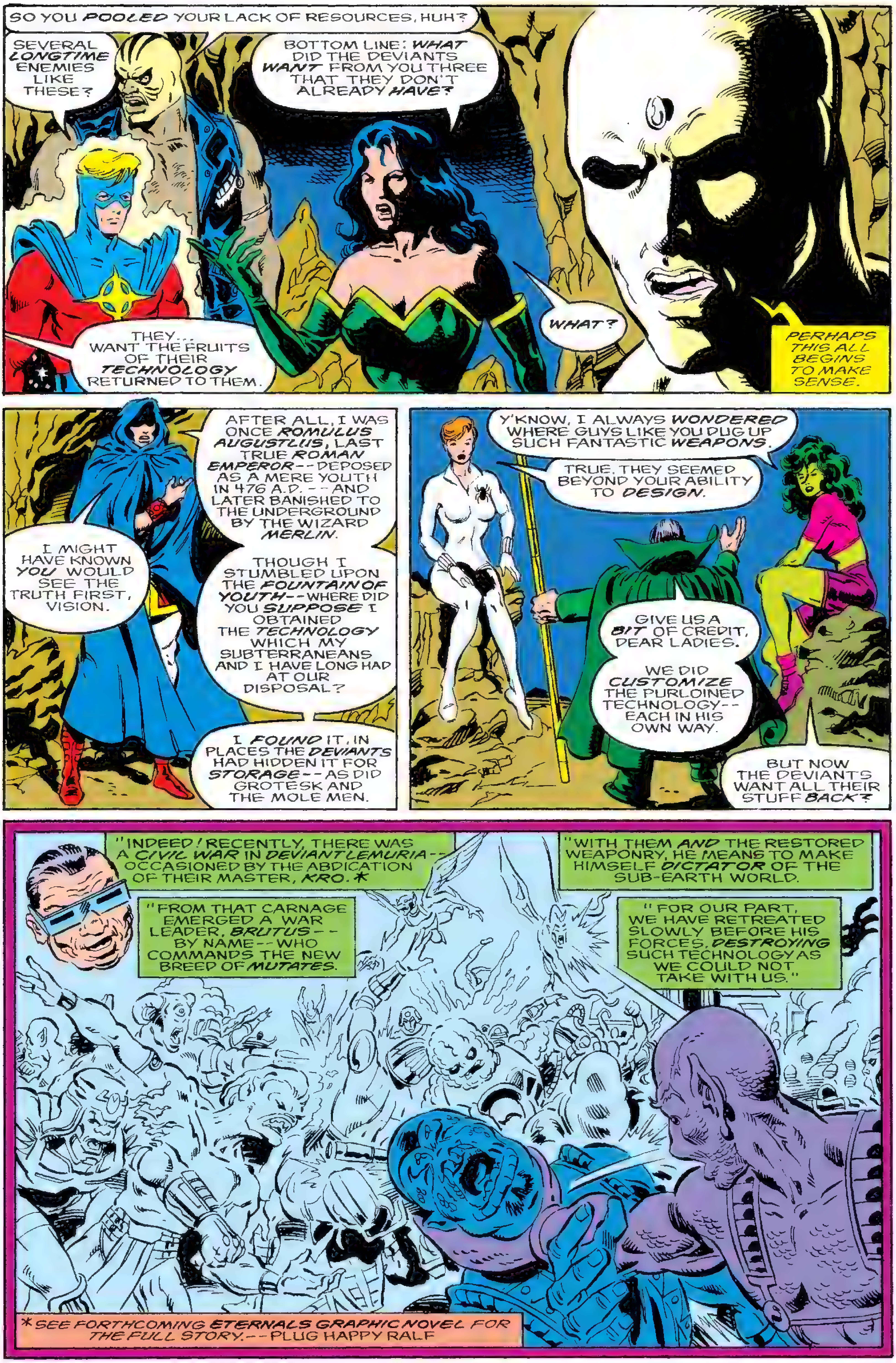

--THEN WE'VE GOT TO FIND OUT *WHO WAS!*
THAT'S JUST WHAT I WAS *HOPIN'* YOU'D SAY, MR. "CHAIR-BEING"!
AND MY *NIGHT OUT* GOES DOWN THE TUBES!
THEN THINK OF IT AS A NIGHT *DOWN AND OUT,* SERSI.
THAT *NIGHT-LIGHT* OF YOURS SHOWING YOU ANYTHING, QUASAR?
AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT *IS*--
--AN ABANDONED *SUB-EARTH WAR MACHINE* OF SOME KIND.
I WONDER WHY THEY DIDN'T BRING THAT UP *WITH* THEM INSTEAD OF POURING OUT OF THE GROUND *ON FOOT*.
MORE THAN *THAT*--WHY IS THERE ONLY *ONE* OF THEM?
THE GREATEST MYSTERY PERHAPS, IS HOW THE THREE KINDS OF SUBTERRANEANS CAME TO ACT TOGETHER.
THE MOLE MEN'S SERVITORS HAVE GENERALLY BEEN AT WAR WITH THOSE OF TYRANNUS--
--AND THE LAVA MEN HAVE USUALLY AVOIDED BOTH OTHER TYPES.
IF *THAT'S* WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW--
--WHY DON'T WE ASK *THESE* GUYS?

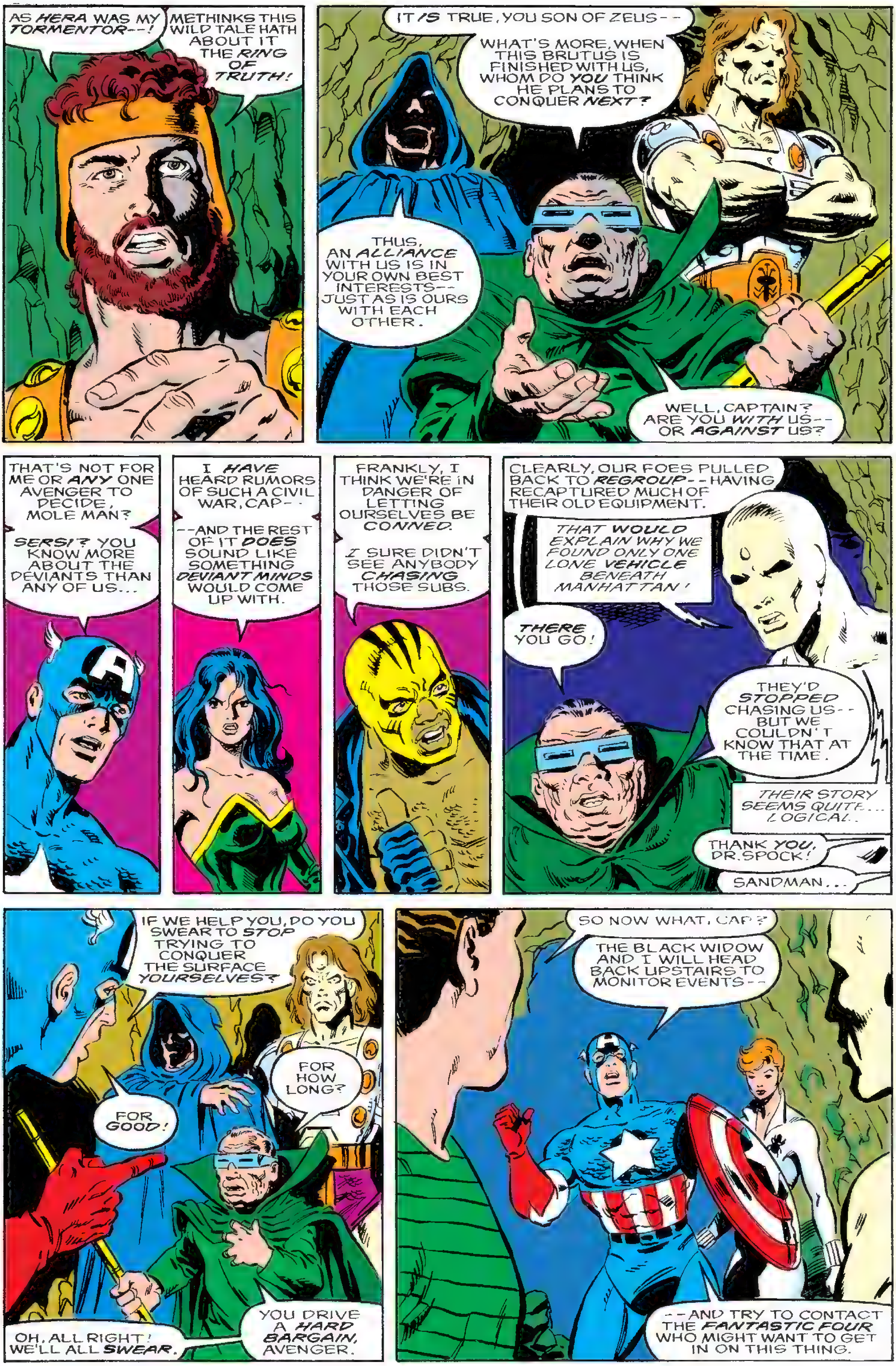

THAT WE *WILL*--
--SOON AS WE GET THEIR *ATTENTION*!
FZIK
SHROOM
NO NEED TO RISK *HURTING* THEM ANY MORE THAN NECESSARY, LADIES.
NOT WHEN ONE OF MY *QUASI-SOLID ENERGY CONSTRUCTS* CAN SCOOP THEM UP JUST AS EASILY.
THESE CHARACTERS WON'T GIVE US ANY MORE TROUBLE.
THE *FIGHT* SEEMS TO HAVE GONE OUT OF 'EM.
AYE, SANDMAN.
THOK
E'EN THIS *LAVA MAN* DID SEEM MORE *PANICKED* THAN PUGNACIOUS, AS HE DID RUSH AT ME.
AND *THAT* DEAR FRIENDS, IS BECAUSE THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT HE *WAS*--
--*PANICKED*, I MEAN!
WHO--?
OVER THERE--IN THE SHADOWS--

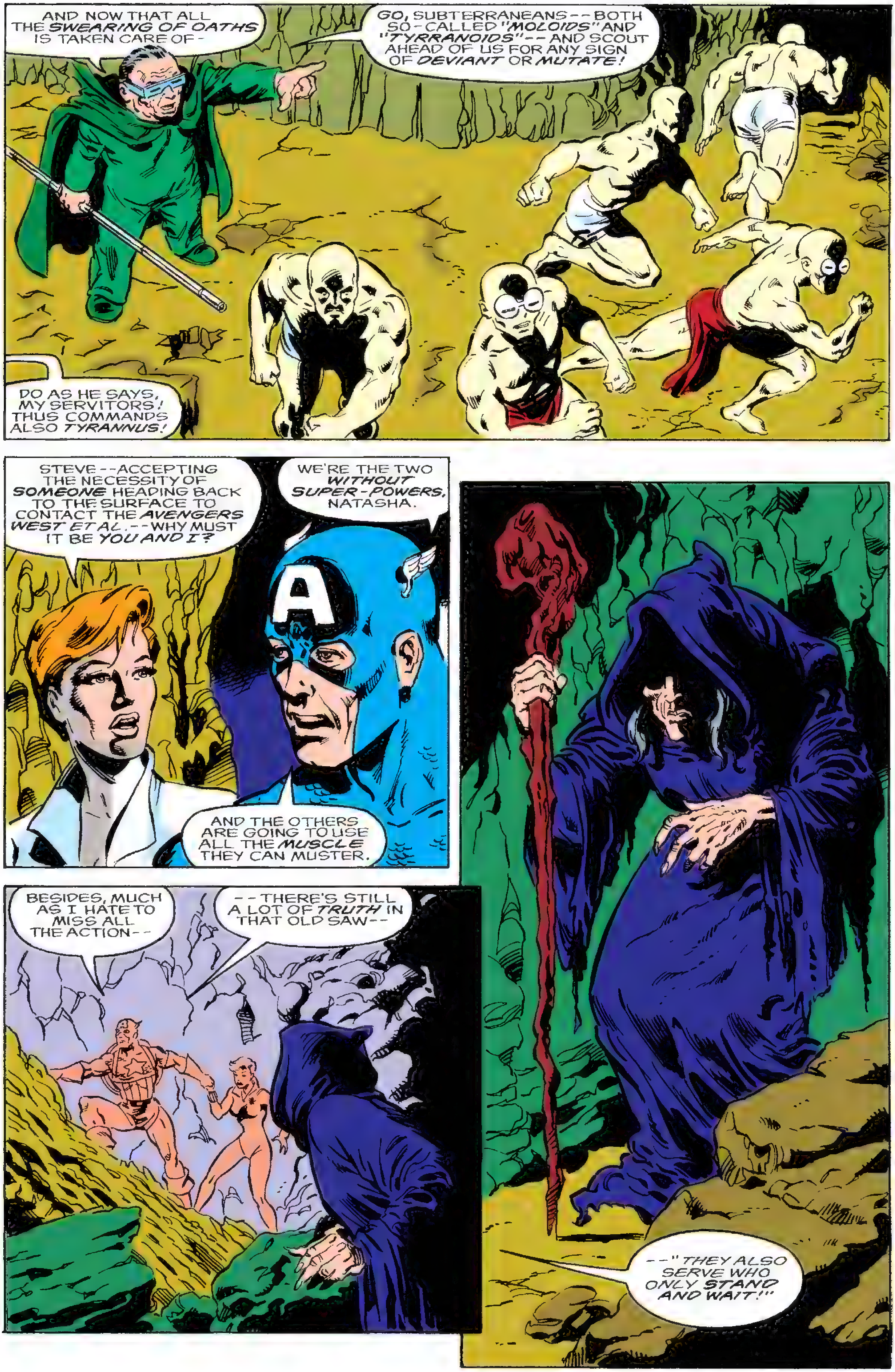

--THE MOLE MAN--
--AND TWO OTHERS, WHOM I DON'T RECOGNIZE!
THE WORTHY ON MY RIGHT, AVENGER, IS TYRANNUS--ONE WELL KNOWN TO SOME OF YOU, FROM PREVIOUS ENCOUNTERS.
FOR REASONS HE HIMSELF MAY SHORTLY CHOOSE TO EXPLAIN, HE PREFERS AT PRESENT TO HIDE HIS LATIN FEATURES BENEATH A COWL.
I PRAY YOU PLEASE DO NOT ATTACK US, AS YOU DID OUR HAPLESS SUBTERRANEANS ABOVEGROUND.
WE ATTACKED THEM!?
SURELY, SMALL ONE, THOU DOST JEST!
NEVER!
OH, AND THIS TALLISH GENTLEMAN ON MY LEFT IS ONE OF WHOM ONE OR TWO OF YOUR FELLOW SUPER-BEINGS AT LEAST HAVE HEARD.
HIS TRUE NAME IS GOR-TOK II. BUT HE PREFERS TO BE CALLED--
GROTESK!

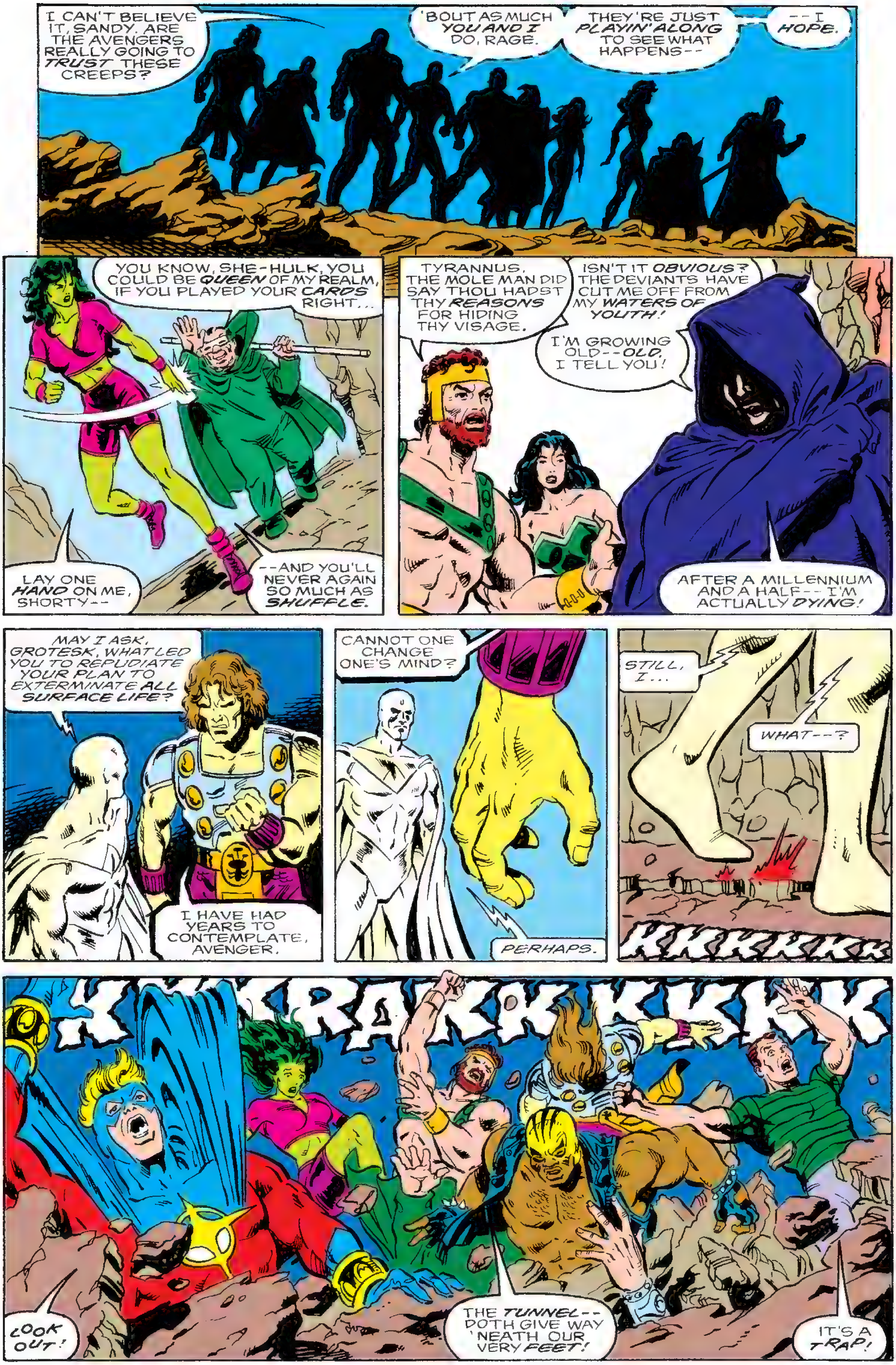

HE *IS*, HUH? I CAN'T FOR THE *LIFE* OF ME IMAGINE *WHY*.
RAGE.
I CALL 'EM THE WAY I *SEE* 'EM, SHIELD-SLINGER.
THAT GUY'S GOT A FACE NOT EVEN MY *GRANNY* COULD LOVE!
HOLD YOUR TONGUE, HUMAN!
HUMMF--!
TEACH YA TO GO AROUND MAKIN' CRACKS ABOUT *SOMEBODY ELSE'S* KISSER.
MISTER, WHEN I GET FINISHED WITH *HIM*--
WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE *NOW* IS GONNA SEEM LIKE THE *GOOD OLD DAYS!*
HEY--!
AT EASE, RAGE!
THEY MADE NO MOVE TO THREATEN US--SO WE MUST HEAR THEM OUT.
WELL REASONED AND WELL STATED, VISION. AND I'M SURE MY CHALK-WHITE FRIEND WILL LIKEWISE RESTRAIN HIMSELF.
FOR THE PRESENT.
AFTER ALL, AFFAIRS ARE FAR TOO *SERIOUS* FOR US TO SQUABBLE AMONGST *OURSELVES*
ARE THEY, MOLE MAN?
EVEN WHEN I RECALL FROM FILE REPORTS THAT GROTESK'S STATED AMBITION WAS TO *DESTROY ALL HUMAN LIFE*--EVEN IF HE HIMSELF PERISHED IN THE PROCESS?
I READ THAT REPORT, TOO. IF YOU THREE "*COME IN PEACE*"--WHY'D YOU LAUNCH THAT *ASSAULT ON BROADWAY?*
WE LAUNCHED *NO* ASSAULT.
NOW, *LOOK*--WE *SAW*--
WHAT YOU *SAW* WAS SUBTERRANEANS AND LAVA MEN POURING FORTH FROM A FISSURE OPENED IN NEW YORK'S STREETS. THAT WE DO NOT DENY.
BUT THEY WERE *NOT* ATTACKING THE CITY.
RATHER, THEY WERE *FLEEING*--
--FLEEING FROM THE DEVIANTS!

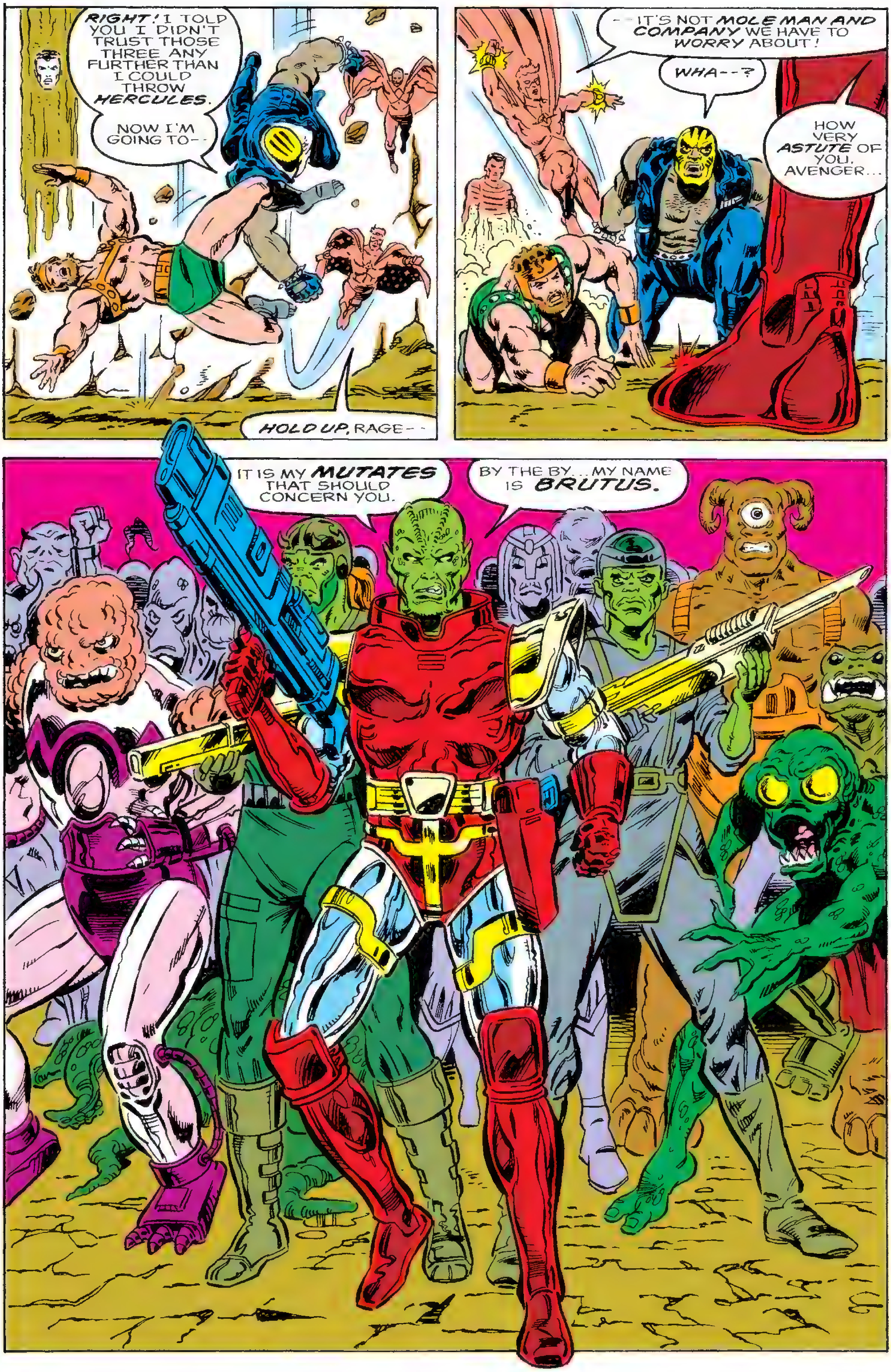

WHAT? ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL US--?
OUR GROUNDLING GUESTS SEEM SKEPTICAL, GROTESK.
PERHAPS IF YOU WERE TO TELL THEM YOUR TALE....
YES. AND IF THEY CHOOSE NOT TO *BELIEVE* ME, TYRANNUS, THEY SHALL SOON *REGRET* IT...
"FOLLOWING MY DEFEATS AT THE HANDS OF OTHER GAUDILY-CLAD HUMANS,* I WANDERED ALONE BENEATH THE EARTH.
"MONTHS AGO, I ENCOUNTERED THE FEW *LAVA MEN* WHO HAD NOT BEEN TRANSMUTED INTO *GOLD* BY OTHER HANDS.
*X-MEN #41 AND MS. MARVEL #6. --LONELY RALF
"RECOGNIZING ME AS THE LAST SURVIVOR OF THE *GORTOKIAN RACE* WHICH HAD ONCE RULED THEIR ANCESTORS, THEY PUT ME UPON A CRUDE *THRONE* THEY HAD ERECTED--
"--AND PROCLAIMED ME, ONCE AND FOREVER, THEIR RIGHTFUL *KING*.
"I HAD LONG SINCE *RENOUNCED* MY DESIRE TO DESTROY ALL LIFE ON THE SURFACE.
"SO I RULED MY NEW KINGDOM IN PEACE FOR SOME TIME--
--BUT NOT LONG AGO, IT WAS SUDDENLY ATTACKED BY A NEW BREED OF *MUTATE*.
MUTATE? YOU MEAN THE CREATURES BRED BY THE *DEVIANTS*--THE ENEMY OF *MY* RACE, THE *ETERNALS*?
YES, FEMALE--"*SERSI*," IS IT NOT?
SO HOW DID *YOU TWO* GET INTO THE ACT?
GROTESK'S LAVA MEN WERE ONLY THE *FIRST* TO FEEL THE BRUNT OF THE DEVIANT-LED STRIKE, CAPTAIN AMERICA.
IN SHORT ORDER, TYRANNUS AND I WERE LIKEWISE ASSAULTED BY THEM.

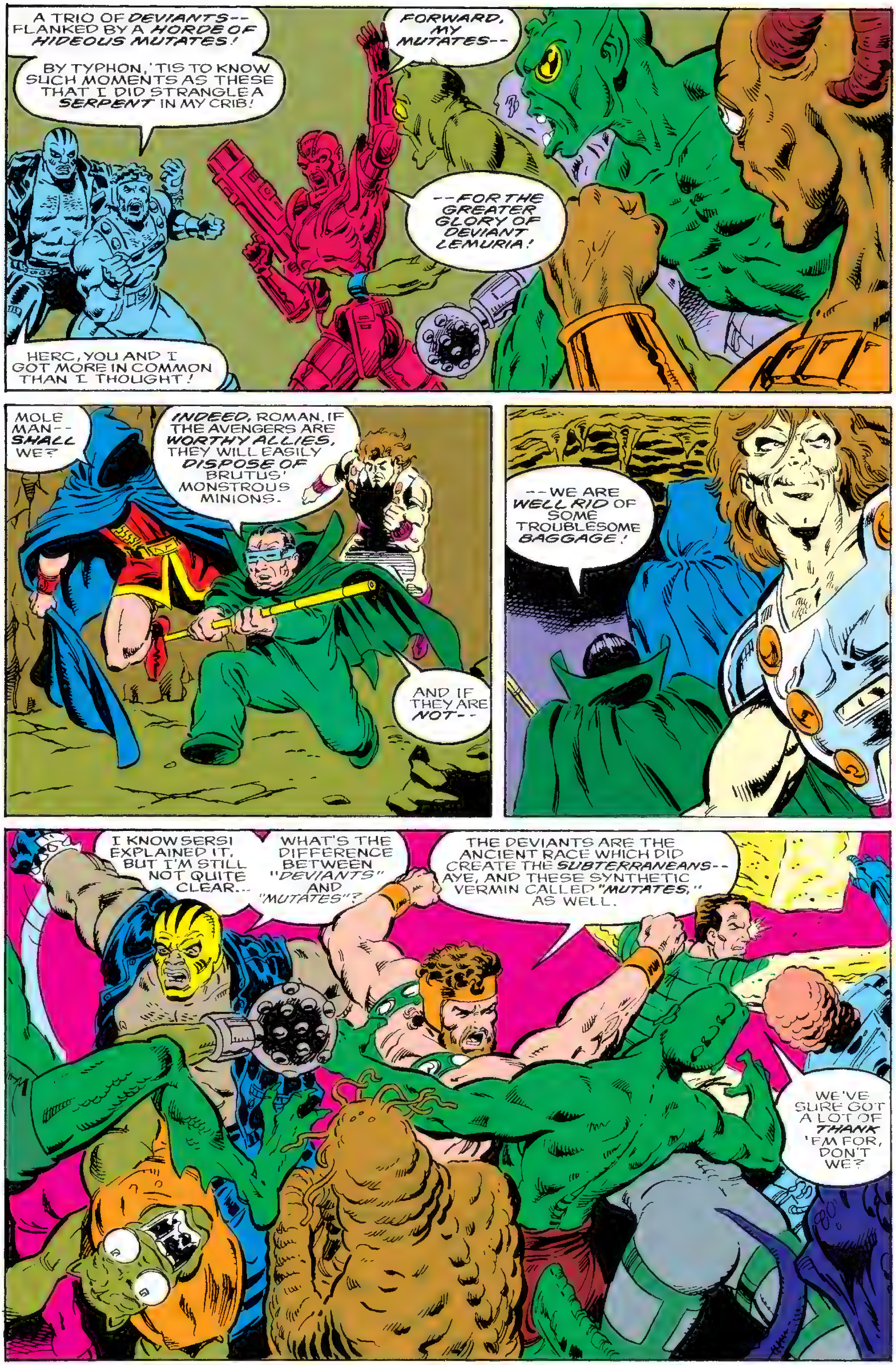

SO YOU POOLED YOUR LACK OF RESOURCES, HUH?
SEVERAL LONGTIME ENEMIES LIKE THESE?
BOTTOM LINE: WHAT DID THE DEVIANTS WANT FROM YOU THREE THAT THEY DON'T ALREADY HAVE?
THEY... WANT THE FRUITS OF THEIR TECHNOLOGY RETURNED TO THEM.
WHAT?
PERHAPS THIS ALL BEGINS TO MAKE SENSE.
I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN YOU WOULD SEE THE TRUTH FIRST, VISION.
AFTER ALL, I WAS ONCE ROMULUS AUGUSTLUS, LAST TRUE ROMAN EMPEROR--DEPOSED AS A MERE YOUTH IN 476 A.D.--AND LATER BANISHED TO THE UNDERGROUND BY THE WIZARD MERLIN.
THOUGH I STUMBLED UPON THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH--WHERE DID YOU SUPPOSE I OBTAINED THE TECHNOLOGY WHICH MY SUBTERRANEANS AND I HAVE LONG HAD AT OUR DISPOSAL?
I FOUND IT, IN PLACES THE DEVIANTS HAD HIDDEN IT FOR STORAGE--AS DID GROTESK AND THE MOLE MEN.
Y'KNOW, I ALWAYS WONDERED WHERE GUYS LIKE YOU DUG UP SUCH FANTASTIC WEAPONS.
TRUE. THEY SEEMED BEYOND YOUR ABILITY TO DESIGN.
GIVE US A BIT OF CREDIT, DEAR LADIES.
WE DID CUSTOMIZE THE PURLOINED TECHNOLOGY--EACH IN HIS OWN WAY.
BUT NOW THE DEVIANTS WANT ALL THEIR STUFF BACK?
"INDEED! RECENTLY, THERE WAS A CIVIL WAR IN DEVIANT LEMURIA--OCCASIONED BY THE ABDICATION OF THEIR MASTER, KRO.*
"FROM THAT CARNAGE EMERGED A WAR LEADER, BRUTUS--BY NAME--WHO COMMANDS THE NEW BREED OF MUTATES.
"WITH THEM AND THE RESTORED WEAPONRY, HE MEANS TO MAKE HIMSELF DICTATOR OF THE SUB-EARTH WORLD.
"FOR OUR PART, WE HAVE RETREATED SLOWLY BEFORE HIS FORCES, DESTROYING SUCH TECHNOLOGY AS WE COULD NOT TAKE WITH US."
*SEE FORTHCOMING ETERNALS GRAPHIC NOVEL FOR THE FULL STORY.--PLUG HAPPY RALF


AS HERA WAS MY TORMENTOR--!
METHINKS THIS WILD TALE HATH ABOUT IT THE RING OF TRUTH!
IT IS TRUE, YOU SON OF ZEUS--
WHAT'S MORE, WHEN THIS BRUTUS IS FINISHED WITH US, WHOM DO YOU THINK HE PLANS TO CONQUER NEXT?
THUS, AN ALLIANCE WITH US IS IN YOUR OWN BEST INTERESTS-- JUST AS IS OURS WITH EACH OTHER.
WELL, CAPTAIN? ARE YOU WITH US-- OR AGAINST US?
THAT'S NOT FOR ME OR ANY ONE AVENGER TO DECIDE, MOLE MAN?
SERSI? YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT THE DEVIANTS THAN ANY OF US...
I HAVE HEARD RUMORS OF SUCH A CIVIL WAR, CAP--
--AND THE REST OF IT DOES SOUND LIKE SOMETHING DEVIANT MINDS WOULD COME UP WITH.
FRANKLY, I THINK WE'RE IN DANGER OF LETTING OURSELVES BE CONNED.
I SURE DIDN'T SEE ANYBODY CHASING THOSE SUBS.
CLEARLY, OUR FOES PULLED BACK TO REGROUP-- HAVING RECAPTURED MUCH OF THEIR OLD EQUIPMENT.
THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY WE FOUND ONLY ONE LONE VEHICLE BENEATH MANHATTAN!
THERE YOU GO!
THEY'D STOPPED CHASING US-- BUT WE COULDN'T KNOW THAT AT THE TIME.
THEIR STORY SEEMS QUITE... LOGICAL.
THANK YOU, DR. SPOCK!
SANDMAN...
IF WE HELP YOU, DO YOU SWEAR TO STOP TRYING TO CONQUER THE SURFACE YOURSELVES?
FOR GOOD!
FOR HOW LONG?
OH, ALL RIGHT! WE'LL ALL SWEAR.
YOU DRIVE A HARD BARGAIN, AVENGER.
SO NOW WHAT, CAP?
THE BLACK WIDOW AND I WILL HEAD BACK UPSTAIRS TO MONITOR EVENTS--
--AND TRY TO CONTACT THE FANTASTIC FOUR WHO MIGHT WANT TO GET IN ON THIS THING.

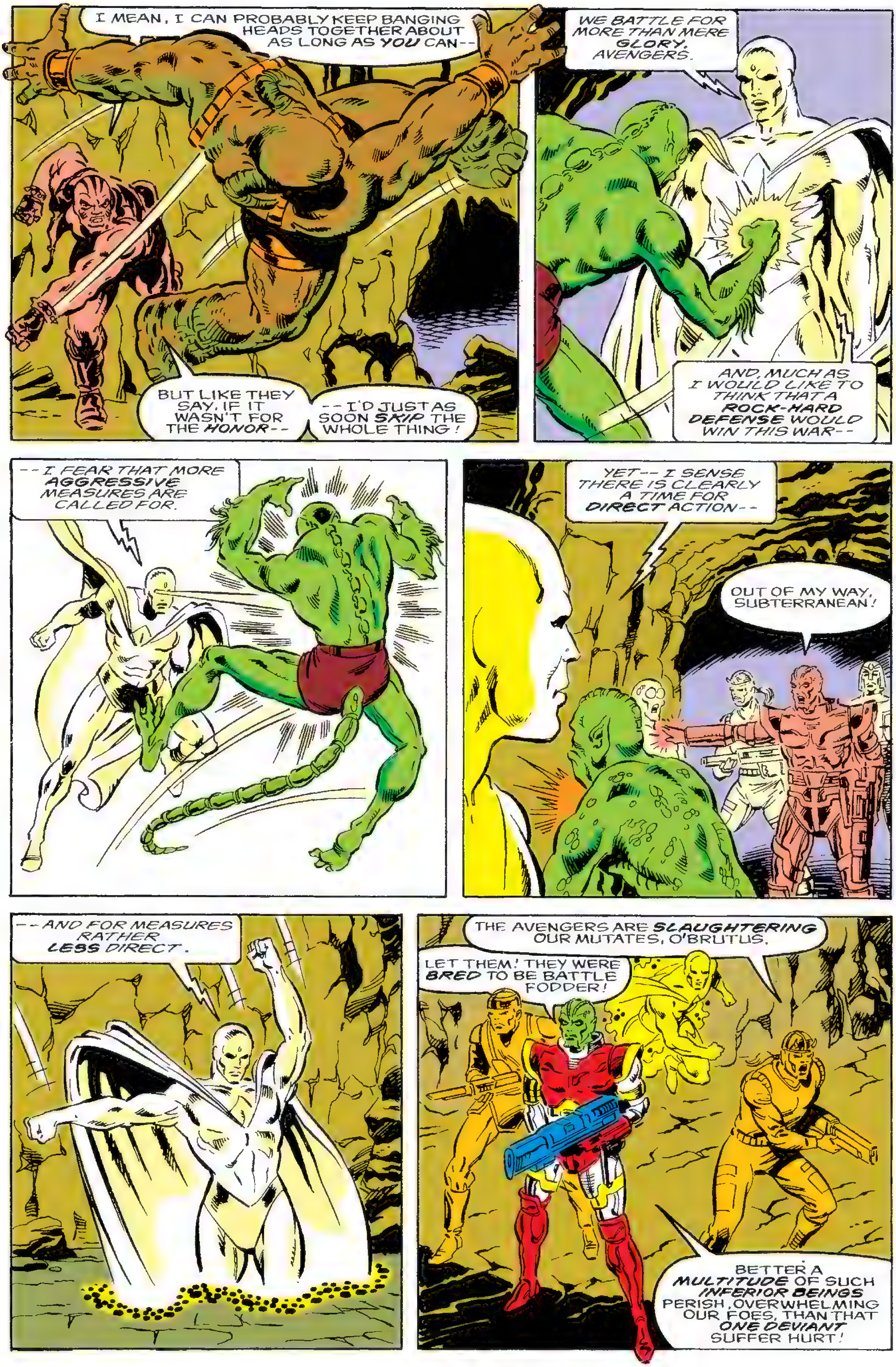

AND NOW THAT ALL THE *SWEARING OF OATHS* IS TAKEN CARE OF-
GO, SUBTERRANEANS--BOTH SO-CALLED "*MOLOIDS*" AND "*TYRRANOIDS*"--AND SCOUT AHEAD OF US FOR ANY SIGN OF *DEVIANT* OR *MUTATE!*
DO AS HE SAYS, MY SERVITORS! THUS COMMANDS ALSO *TYRANNUS!*
STEVE--ACCEPTING THE NECESSITY OF *SOMEONE* HEADING BACK TO THE SURFACE TO CONTACT THE *AVENGERS WEST ET AL.*--WHY MUST IT BE *YOU AND I?*
WE'RE THE TWO *WITHOUT SUPER-POWERS,* NATASHA.
AND THE OTHERS ARE GOING TO USE ALL THE *MUSCLE* THEY CAN MUSTER.
BESIDES, MUCH AS I HATE TO MISS ALL THE ACTION--
--THERE'S STILL A LOT OF *TRUTH* IN THAT OLD SAW--
--"*THEY ALSO SERVE WHO ONLY STAND AND WAIT!*"

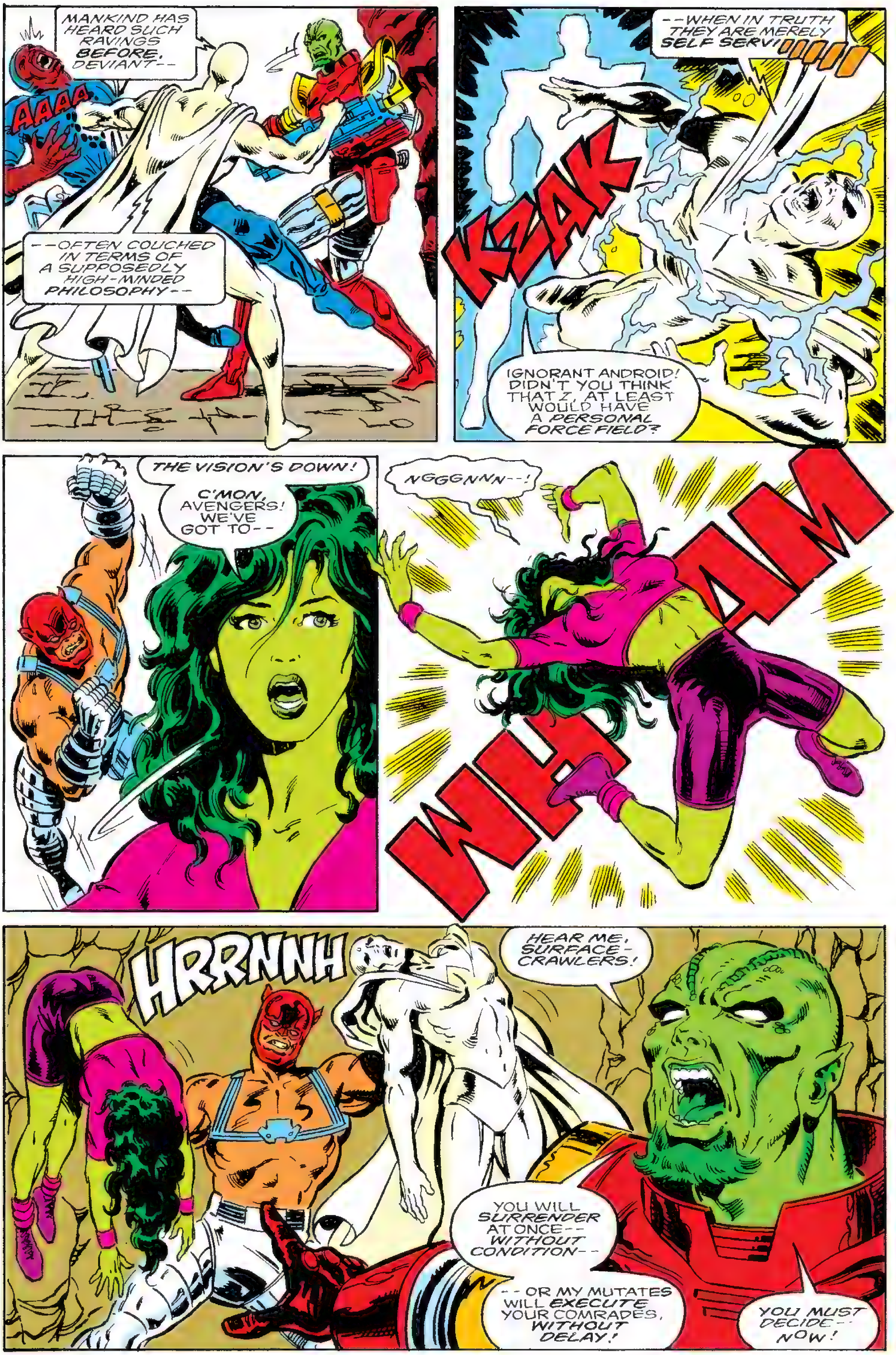

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT, SANDY. ARE THE AVENGERS REALLY GOING TO *TRUST* THESE CREEPS?
'BOUT AS MUCH *YOU AND I* DO, RAGE.
THEY'RE JUST *PLAYIN' ALONG* TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS--
--I *HOPE.*
YOU KNOW, SHE-HULK, YOU COULD BE *QUEEN* OF MY REALM, IF YOU PLAYED YOUR *CARDS* RIGHT...
LAY ONE *HAND* ON ME, SHORTY--
--AND YOU'LL NEVER AGAIN SO MUCH AS *SHUFFLE.*
TYRANNUS, THE MOLE MAN DID SAY THOU HADST THY *REASONS* FOR HIDING THY VISAGE.
ISN'T IT *OBVIOUS*? THE DEVIANTS HAVE CUT ME OFF FROM MY *WATERS OF YOUTH!*
I'M GROWING OLD--*OLD,* I TELL YOU!
AFTER A MILLENNIUM AND A HALF--I'M ACTUALLY *DYING!*
MAY I ASK, GROTESK, WHAT LED YOU TO REPUDIATE YOUR PLAN TO EXTERMINATE ALL SURFACE LIFE?
I HAVE HAD YEARS TO CONTEMPLATE, AVENGER.
CANNOT ONE CHANGE ONE'S MIND?
PERHAPS.
STILL, I...
WHAT--?
KKKKKKK
KKKRAKK KKKKK
LOOK OUT!
THE *TUNNEL*--DOTH GIVE WAY 'NEATH OUR VERY *FEET!*
IT'S A *TRAP!*


RIGHT! I TOLD YOU I DIDN'T TRUST THOSE THREE ANY FURTHER THAN I COULD THROW HERCULES.
NOW I'M GOING TO--
HOLD UP, RAGE--
--IT'S NOT MOLE MAN AND COMPANY WE HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT!
WHA--?
HOW VERY ASTUTE OF YOU, AVENGER...
IT IS MY MUTATES THAT SHOULD CONCERN YOU.
BY THE BY... MY NAME IS BRUTUS.

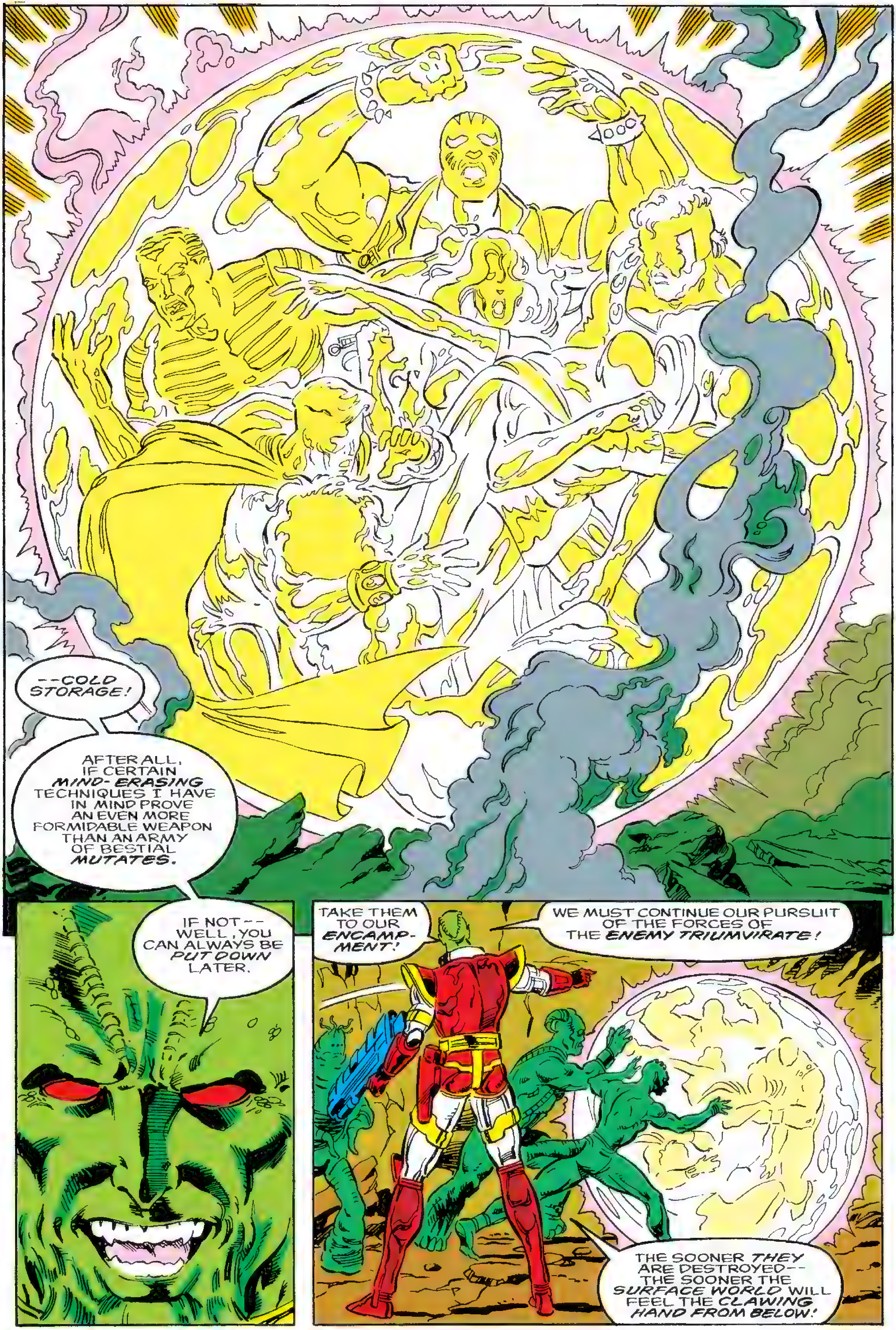

A TRIO OF *DEVIANTS*-- FLANKED BY A *HORDE OF HIDEOUS MUTATES!*
BY TYPHON, 'TIS TO KNOW SUCH MOMENTS AS THESE THAT I DID STRANGLE A *SERPENT* IN MY CRIB!
FORWARD, MY MUTATES--
--FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF DEVIANT LEMURIA!
HERC, YOU AND I GOT MORE IN COMMON THAN I THOUGHT!
MOLE MAN-- *SHALL* WE?
INDEED, ROMAN. IF THE AVENGERS ARE *WORTHY ALLIES,* THEY WILL EASILY *DISPOSE OF* BRUTUS' MONSTROUS MINIONS.
AND IF THEY ARE *NOT*--
--WE ARE *WELL RID* OF SOME TROUBLESOME *BAGGAGE!*
I KNOW SERSI EXPLAINED IT, BUT I'M STILL NOT QUITE CLEAR...
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "*DEVIANTS*" AND "*MUTATES*"?
THE DEVIANTS ARE THE ANCIENT RACE WHICH DID CREATE THE *SUBTERRANEANS*-- AYE, AND THESE SYNTHETIC VERMIN CALLED "*MUTATES,*" AS WELL.
WE'VE SURE GOT A LOT OF *THANK* 'EM FOR, DON'T WE?

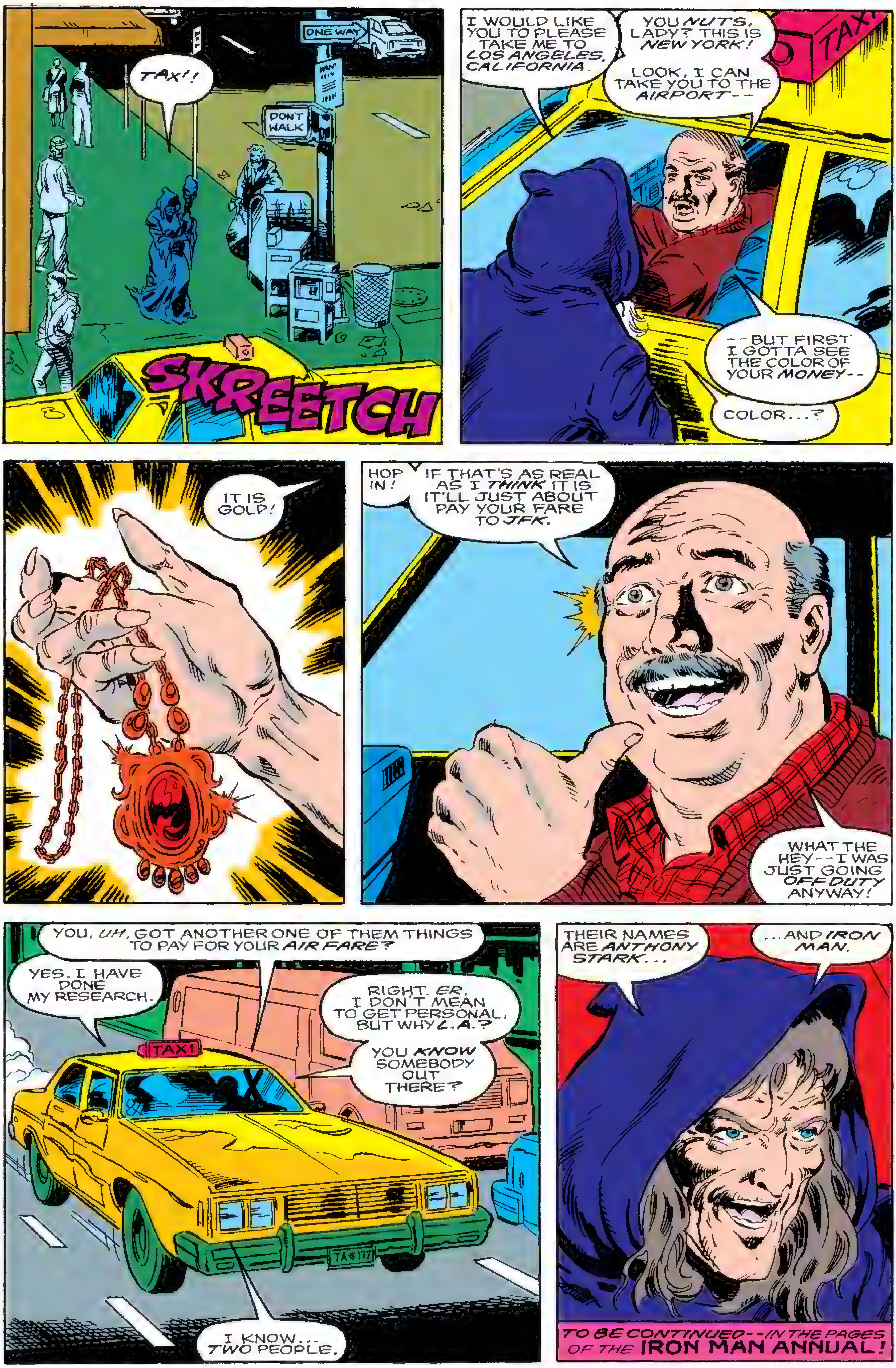
LUCKILY, *THIS* BATCH OF MUTATES WAS APPARENTLY BRED TO OPERATE UNDERGROUND IN THE *DARK*--SO THEY SHOULD BE VULNERABLE TO *LIGHT*.
AND THEN AGAIN-
MMMFF!
--*SOME* OF THEM DON'T EVEN HAVE *EYES* TO BE BLINDED!
LUCKILY, MY QUANTUM BANDS HAVE *OTHER* USES.
AT LEAST THESE SILENT PARTNERS DON'T *TALK* YOU TO DEATH, LIKE MOST OF OUR ENEMIES.
SOK
IF ONLY THERE DIDN'T SEEM TO BE AN ALMOST *INFINITE NUMBER* OF THEM!
ZZIT
I SAY TO THEE, SERSI--*LET THEM COME!*
VERILY, THOUGH THERE BE A *THOUSAND* TIMES A *THOUSAND* OF THESE VILE MUTATES--
--THE *PRINCE OF POWER* SHALL KNOW NEITHER FRUSTRATION NOR FATIGUE!
WHOM!
ARRGH! Y'KNOW SOMETHING, WHISKERS?
BRAK!
YOU AND I JUST *PARTED COMPANY,* AFTER ALL!

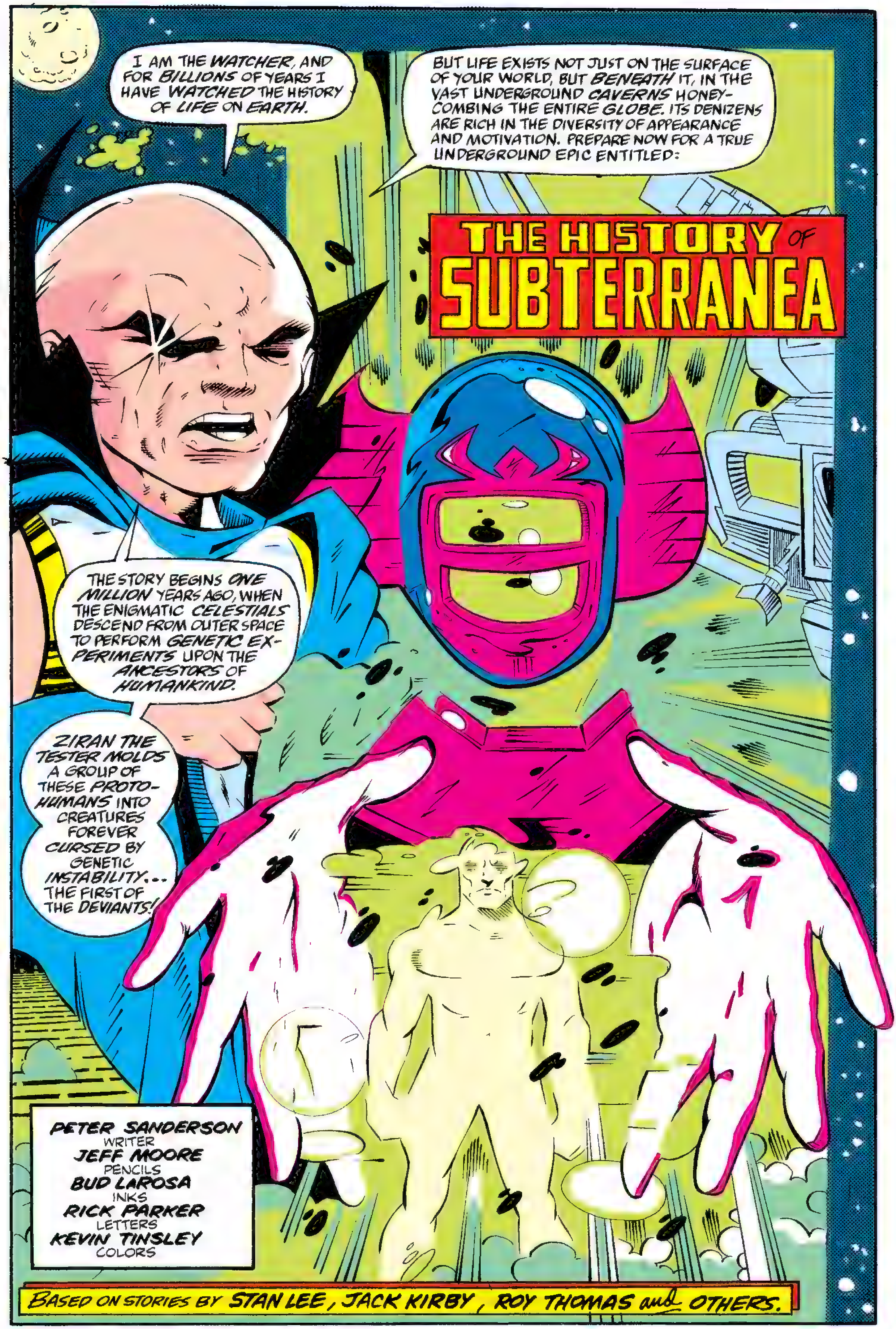

I MEAN, I CAN PROBABLY KEEP BANGING HEADS TOGETHER ABOUT AS LONG AS *YOU* CAN--
BUT LIKE THEY SAY, IF IT WASN'T FOR THE *HONOR*--
--I'D JUST AS SOON *SKIP* THE WHOLE THING!
WE BATTLE FOR MORE THAN MERE *GLORY*, AVENGERS.
AND, MUCH AS I WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT A *ROCK-HARD DEFENSE* WOULD WIN THIS WAR--
--I FEAR THAT MORE *AGGRESSIVE* MEASURES ARE CALLED FOR.
YET-- I SENSE THERE IS CLEARLY A TIME FOR *DIRECT* ACTION--
OUT OF MY WAY, SUBTERRANEAN!
--AND FOR MEASURES RATHER *LESS DIRECT*.
THE AVENGERS ARE *SLAUGHTERING* OUR MUTATES, O'BRUTUS.
LET THEM! THEY WERE *BRED* TO BE BATTLE FODDER!
BETTER A *MULTITUDE* OF SUCH *INFERIOR BEINGS* PERISH, OVERWHELMING OUR FOES, THAN THAT *ONE DEVIANT* SUFFER HURT!

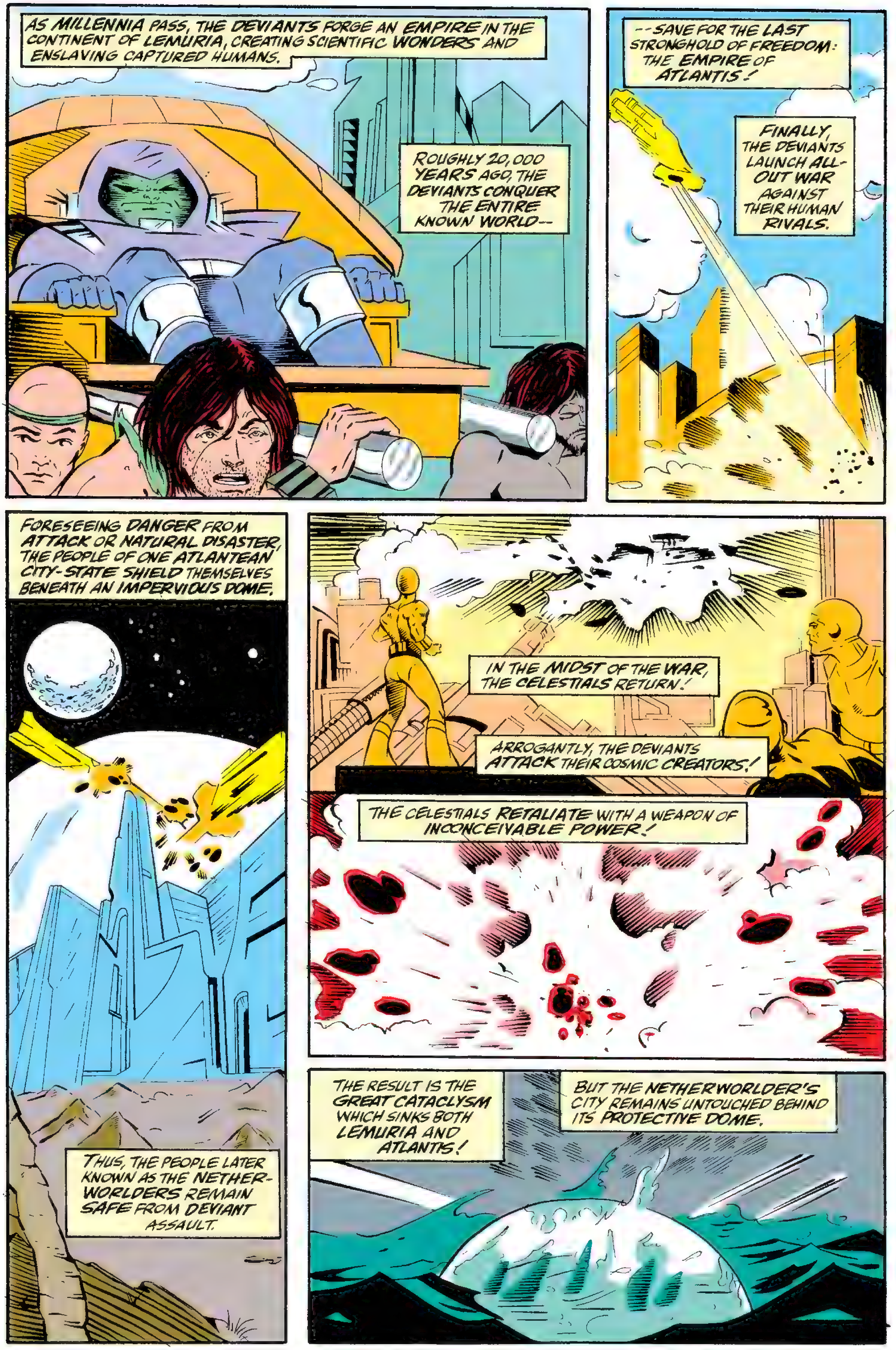

AAAA
MANKIND HAS HEARD SUCH RAVINGS BEFORE, DEVIANT--
--OFTEN COUCHED IN TERMS OF A SUPPOSEDLY HIGH-MINDED PHILOSOPHY--
--WHEN IN TRUTH THEY ARE MERELY SELF SERVIIIIII
KZAK
IGNORANT ANDROID! DIDN'T YOU THINK THAT Z, AT LEAST WOULD HAVE A PERSONAL FORCE FIELD?
THE VISION'S DOWN!
C'MON, AVENGERS! WE'VE GOT TO--
NGGGNNN--!
WHAM
HRRNNH
HEAR ME, SURFACE-CRAWLERS!
YOU WILL SURRENDER AT ONCE-- WITHOUT CONDITION--
--OR MY MUTATES WILL EXECUTE YOUR COMRADES, WITHOUT DELAY!
YOU MUST DECIDE-- NOW!

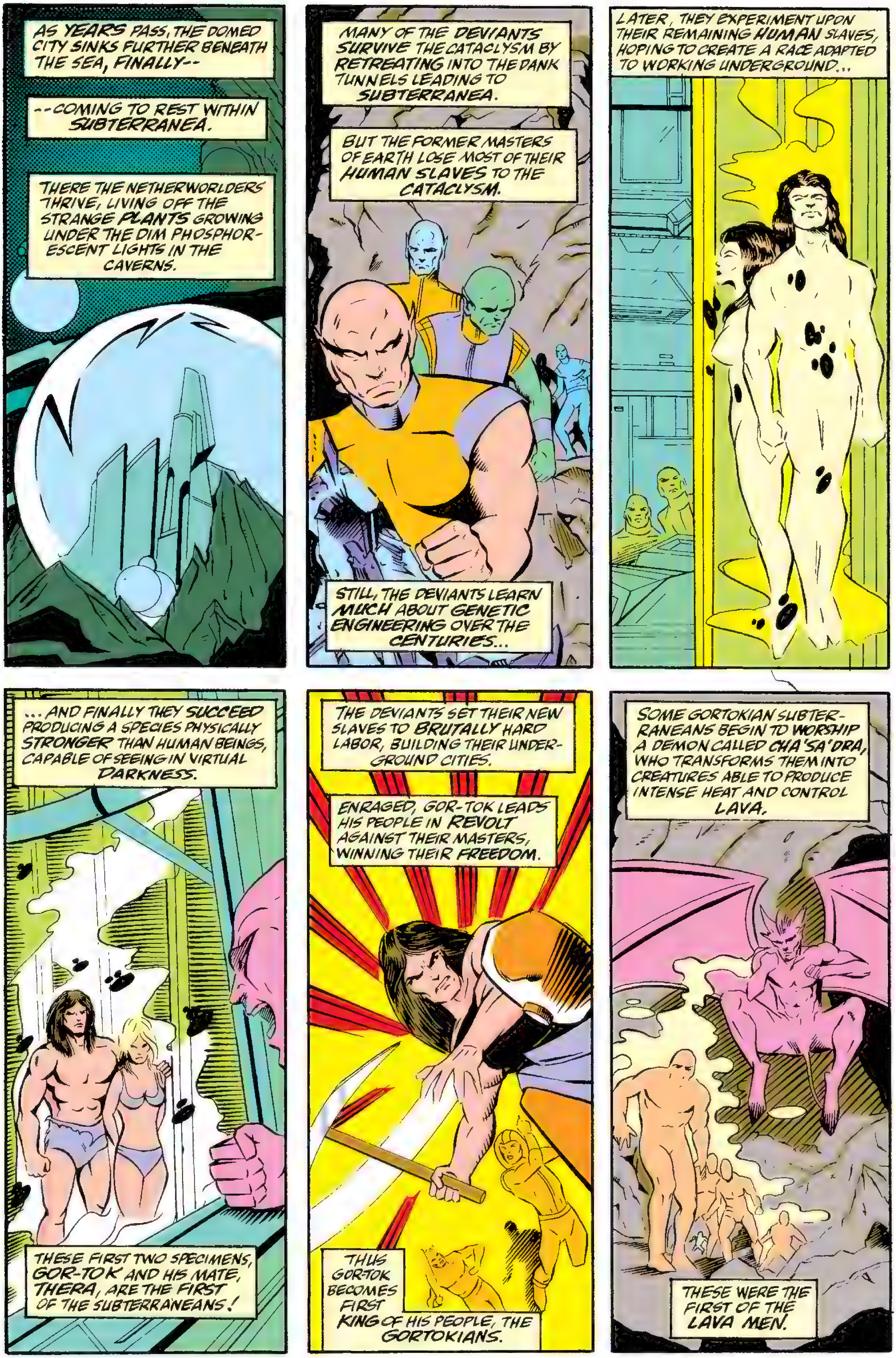
DON'T DO IT, AVENGERS!
YOU CAN'T MAKE DEALS WITH DEVIANTS!
WE MUST FIGHT ON!
THY WORDS ARE SURELY THE HEIGHT OF REASON, ETERNAL-- AND YET--
SHE'S RIGHT! IF WE GIVE UP, THEY'RE DEAD MEAT, ANYWAY-- AND SO ARE WE--
I SAY WE TAKE AS MANY OF 'EM WITH US AS WE--
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MINDS?
SHE-HULK AND THE VISION ARE OUR FRIENDS, FOR PETE'S SAKE!
WE CAN'T STAND BY AND SEE THEM MURDERED-- NOT WHEN WE'VE GOT A CHANCE OF PREVENTING IT.
AYE! HERCULES DOTH STAND WITH QUASAR.
YOU'RE ALL GOING TO LISTEN TO THAT BOY SCOUT, AREN'T YOU?
WELL, ALL RIGHT--
--YOU TALKED ME INTO IT.
EXCELLENT! AND AS A MATTER OF FACT, I DO NOT WISH TO KILL YOU-- NOT YET, AT LEAST.
POOM
HEY!
FAR BETTER--
--SIMPLY TO PUT YOU INTO--

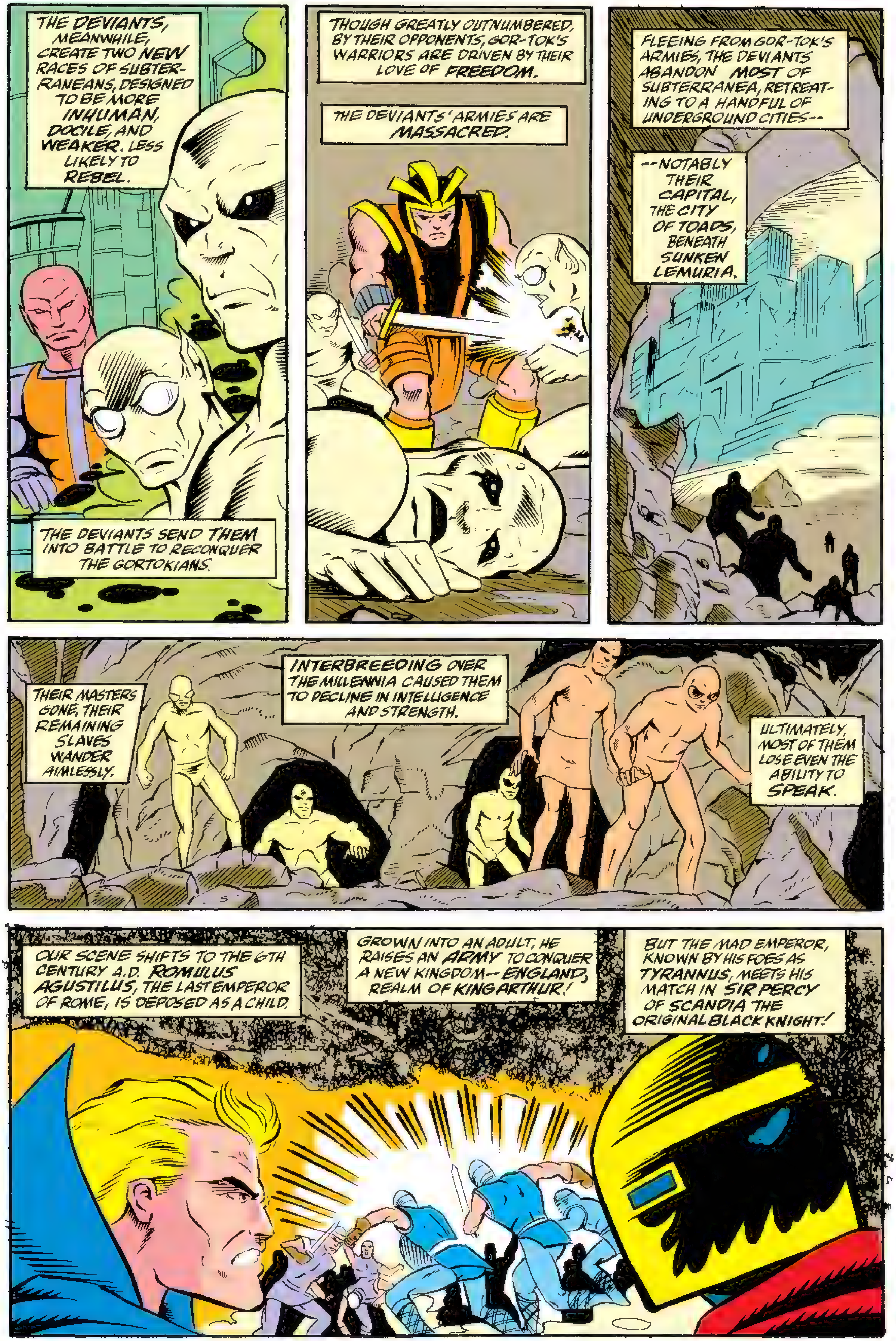

--COLD STORAGE!
AFTER ALL, IF CERTAIN *MIND-ERASING* TECHNIQUES I HAVE IN MIND PROVE AN EVEN MORE FORMIDABLE WEAPON THAN AN ARMY OF BESTIAL *MUTATES*.
IF NOT-- WELL, YOU CAN ALWAYS BE *PUT DOWN* LATER.
TAKE THEM TO OUR *ENCAMPMENT!*
WE MUST CONTINUE OUR PURSUIT OF THE FORCES OF THE *ENEMY TRIUMVIRATE!*
THE SOONER *THEY* ARE DESTROYED-- THE SOONER THE *SURFACE WORLD* WILL FEEL THE *CLAWING HAND FROM BELOW!*

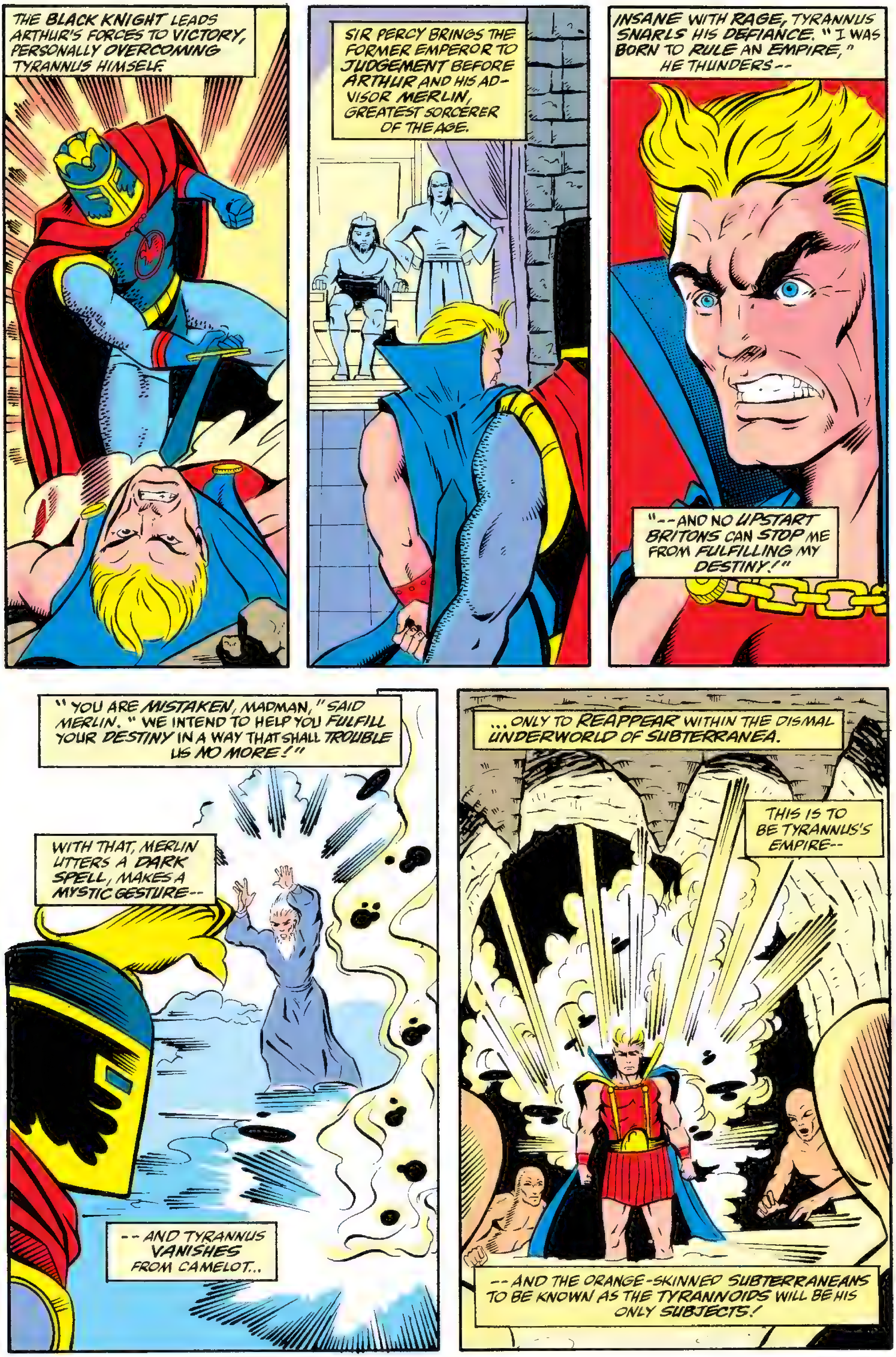

ONE WAY
DON'T WALK
TAX!!
SKREETCH
TAX
I WOULD LIKE YOU TO PLEASE TAKE ME TO LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.
YOU NUTS, LADY? THIS IS NEW YORK!
LOOK, I CAN TAKE YOU TO THE AIRPORT--
--BUT FIRST I GOTTA SEE THE COLOR OF YOUR MONEY--
COLOR...?
IT IS GOLD!
HOP IN!
IF THAT'S AS REAL AS I THINK IT IS IT'LL JUST ABOUT PAY YOUR FARE TO JFK.
WHAT THE HEY--I WAS JUST GOING OFF DUTY ANYWAY!
YOU, UH, GOT ANOTHER ONE OF THEM THINGS TO PAY FOR YOUR AIR FARE?
YES. I HAVE DONE MY RESEARCH.
RIGHT. ER, I DON'T MEAN TO GET PERSONAL, BUT WHY L.A.?
YOU KNOW SOMEBODY OUT THERE?
TAXI
TA*177
I KNOW... TWO PEOPLE.
THEIR NAMES ARE ANTHONY STARK...
...AND IRON MAN.
TO BE CONTINUED--IN THE PAGES OF THE IRON MAN ANNUAL!

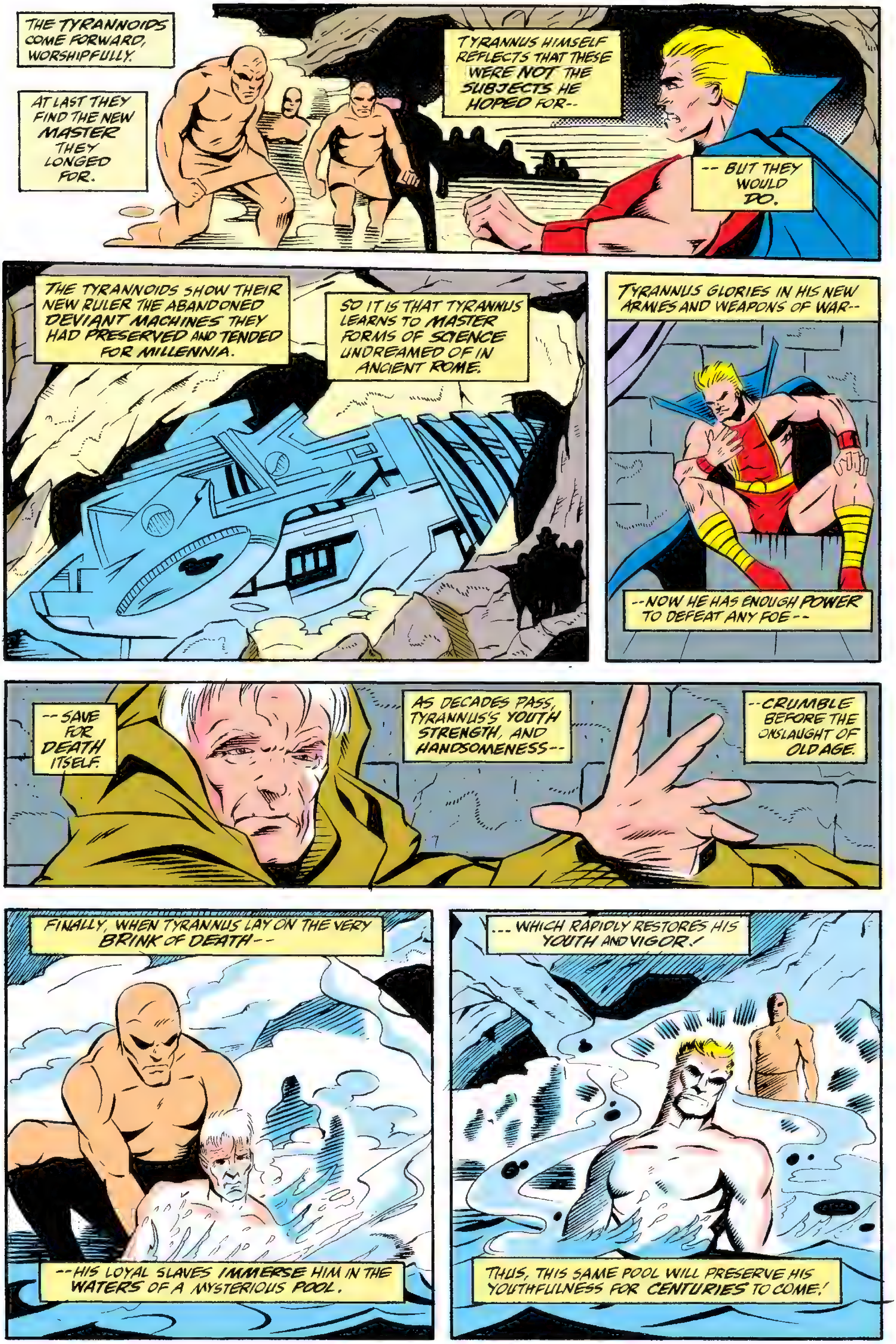

I AM THE WATCHER, AND FOR BILLIONS OF YEARS I HAVE WATCHED THE HISTORY OF LIFE ON EARTH.
BUT LIFE EXISTS NOT JUST ON THE SURFACE OF YOUR WORLD, BUT BENEATH IT, IN THE VAST UNDERGROUND CAVERNS HONEYCOMBING THE ENTIRE GLOBE. ITS DENIZENS ARE RICH IN THE DIVERSITY OF APPEARANCE AND MOTIVATION. PREPARE NOW FOR A TRUE UNDERGROUND EPIC ENTITLED:
THE HISTORY OF SUBTERRANEA
THE STORY BEGINS ONE MILLION YEARS AGO, WHEN THE ENIGMATIC CELESTIALS DESCEND FROM OUTER SPACE TO PERFORM GENETIC EXPERIMENTS UPON THE ANCESTORS OF HUMANKIND.
ZIRAN THE TESTER MOLDS A GROUP OF THESE PROTO-HUMANS INTO CREATURES FOREVER CURSED BY GENETIC INSTABILITY... THE FIRST OF THE DEVIANTS!
PETER SANDERSON WRITER
JEFF MOORE PENCILS
BUD LAROSA INKS
RICK PARKER LETTERS
KEVIN TINSLEY COLORS
BASED ON STORIES BY STAN LEE, JACK KIRBY, ROY THOMAS and OTHERS.

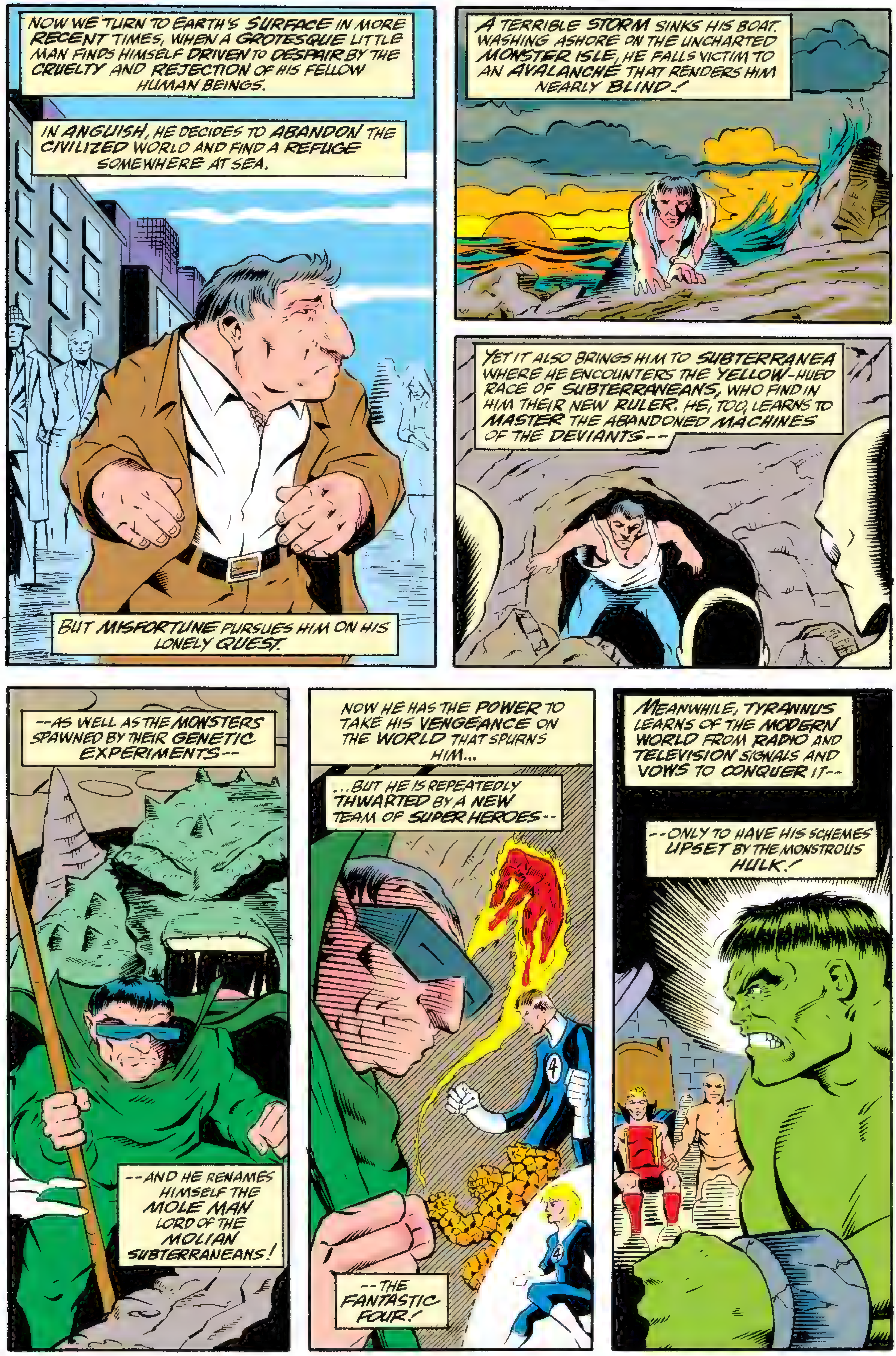

AS MILLENNIA PASS, THE DEVIANTS FORGE AN EMPIRE IN THE CONTINENT OF LEMURIA, CREATING SCIENTIFIC WONDERS AND ENSLAVING CAPTURED HUMANS.
ROUGHLY 20,000 YEARS AGO, THE DEVIANTS CONQUER THE ENTIRE KNOWN WORLD--
--SAVE FOR THE LAST STRONGHOLD OF FREEDOM: THE EMPIRE OF ATLANTIS!
FINALLY, THE DEVIANTS LAUNCH ALL-OUT WAR AGAINST THEIR HUMAN RIVALS.
FORESEEING DANGER FROM ATTACK OR NATURAL DISASTER, THE PEOPLE OF ONE ATLANTEAN CITY-STATE SHIELD THEMSELVES BENEATH AN IMPERVIOUS DOME.
THUS, THE PEOPLE LATER KNOWN AS THE NETHERWORLDERS REMAIN SAFE FROM DEVIANT ASSAULT.
IN THE MIDST OF THE WAR, THE CELESTIALS RETURN!
ARROGANTLY, THE DEVIANTS ATTACK THEIR COSMIC CREATORS!
THE CELESTIALS RETALIATE WITH A WEAPON OF INCONCEIVABLE POWER!
THE RESULT IS THE GREAT CATACLYSM WHICH SINKS BOTH LEMURIA AND ATLANTIS!
BUT THE NETHERWORLDER'S CITY REMAINS UNTOUCHED BEHIND ITS PROTECTIVE DOME.

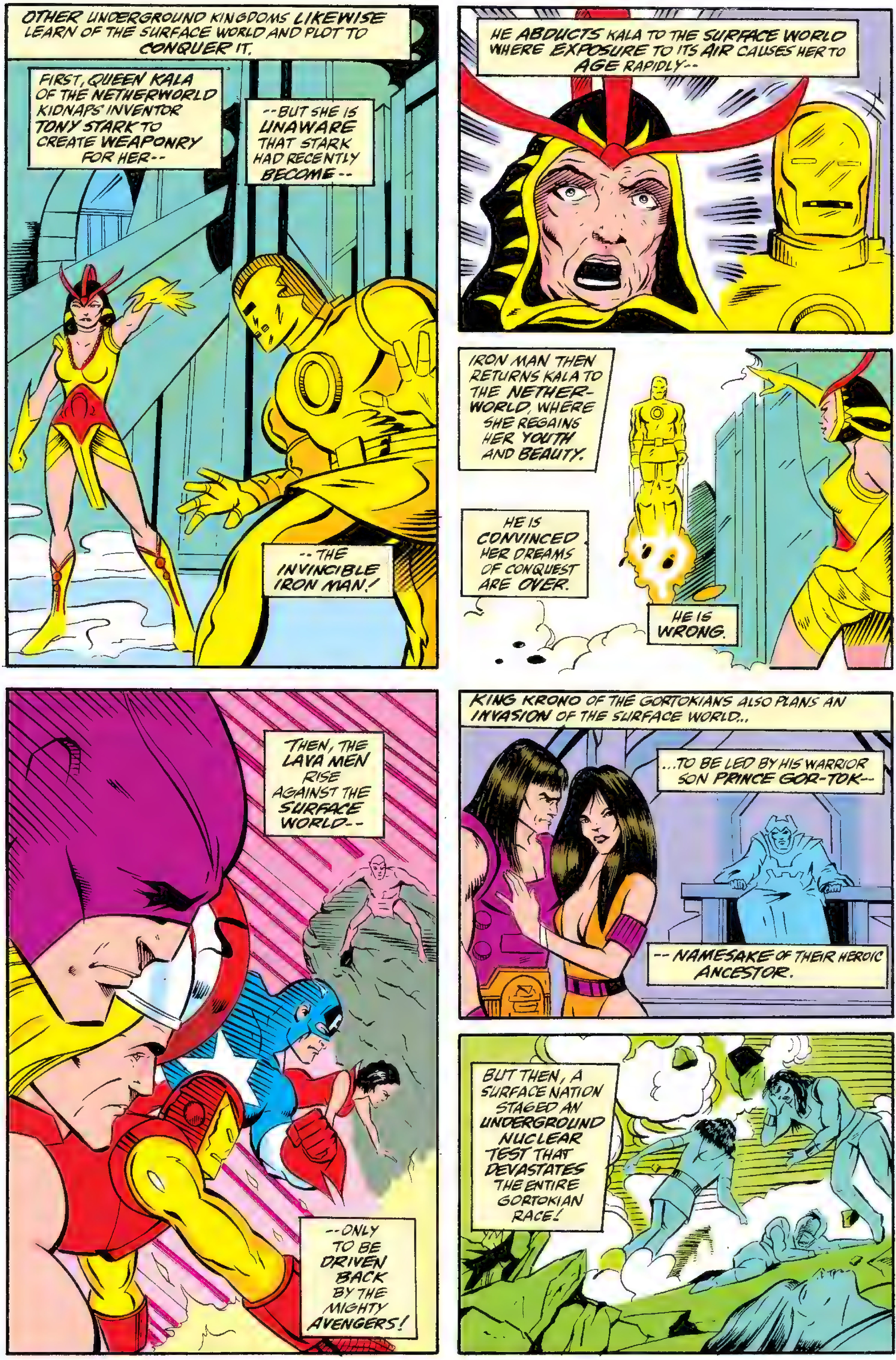

AS YEARS PASS, THE DOMED CITY SINKS FURTHER BENEATH THE SEA, FINALLY--
--COMING TO REST WITHIN SUBTERRANEA.
THERE THE NETHERWORLDERS THRIVE, LIVING OFF THE STRANGE PLANTS GROWING UNDER THE DIM PHOSPHORESCENT LIGHTS IN THE CAVERNS.
MANY OF THE DEVIANTS SURVIVE THE CATACLYSM BY RETREATING INTO THE DANK TUNNELS LEADING TO SUBTERRANEA.
BUT THE FORMER MASTERS OF EARTH LOSE MOST OF THEIR HUMAN SLAVES TO THE CATACLYSM.
STILL, THE DEVIANTS LEARN MUCH ABOUT GENETIC ENGINEERING OVER THE CENTURIES...
LATER, THEY EXPERIMENT UPON THEIR REMAINING HUMAN SLAVES, HOPING TO CREATE A RACE ADAPTED TO WORKING UNDERGROUND...
...AND FINALLY THEY SUCCEED PRODUCING A SPECIES PHYSICALLY STRONGER THAN HUMAN BEINGS, CAPABLE OF SEEING IN VIRTUAL DARKNESS.
THESE FIRST TWO SPECIMENS, GOR-TOK AND HIS MATE, THERA, ARE THE FIRST OF THE SUBTERRANEANS!
THE DEVIANTS SET THEIR NEW SLAVES TO BRUTALLY HARD LABOR, BUILDING THEIR UNDERGROUND CITIES.
ENRAGED, GOR-TOK LEADS HIS PEOPLE IN REVOLT AGAINST THEIR MASTERS, WINNING THEIR FREEDOM.
THUS GOR-TOK BECOMES FIRST KING OF HIS PEOPLE, THE GORTOKIANS.
SOME GORTOKIAN SUBTERRANEANS BEGIN TO WORSHIP A DEMON CALLED CHA'SA'DRA, WHO TRANSFORMS THEM INTO CREATURES ABLE TO PRODUCE INTENSE HEAT AND CONTROL LAVA.
THESE WERE THE FIRST OF THE LAVA MEN.

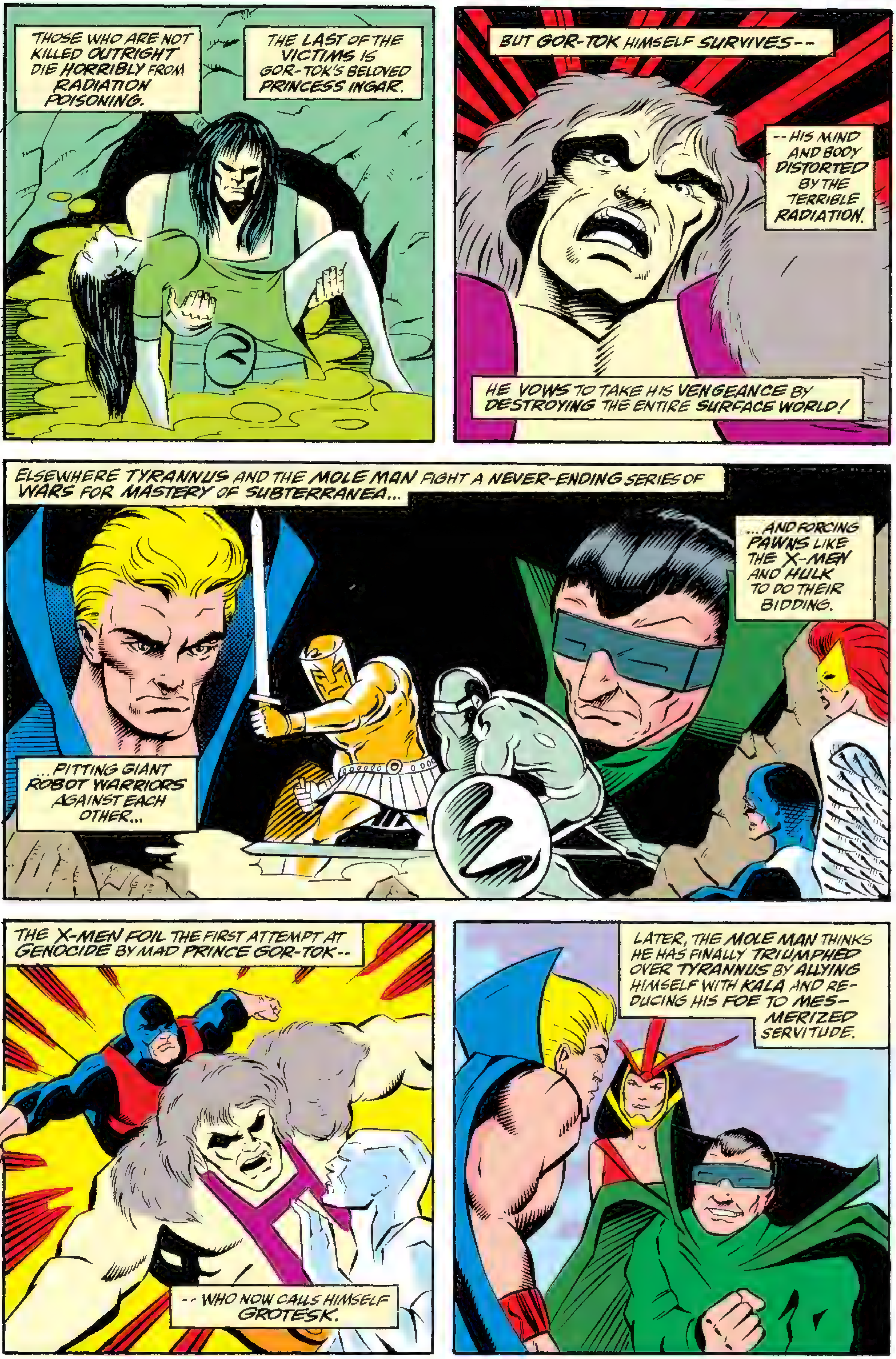

THE DEVIANTS, MEANWHILE, CREATE TWO NEW RACES OF SUBTERRANEANS, DESIGNED TO BE MORE INHUMAN, DOCILE, AND WEAKER. LESS LIKELY TO REBEL.
THE DEVIANTS SEND THEM INTO BATTLE TO RECONQUER THE GORTOKIANS.
THOUGH GREATLY OUTNUMBERED, BY THEIR OPPONENTS, GOR-TOK'S WARRIORS ARE DRIVEN BY THEIR LOVE OF FREEDOM.
THE DEVIANTS' ARMIES ARE MASSACRED.
FLEEING FROM GOR-TOK'S ARMIES, THE DEVIANTS ABANDON MOST OF SUBTERRANEA, RETREATING TO A HANDFUL OF UNDERGROUND CITIES--
--NOTABLY THEIR CAPITAL, THE CITY OF TOADS, BENEATH SUNKEN LEMURIA.
THEIR MASTERS GONE, THEIR REMAINING SLAVES WANDER AIMLESSLY.
INTERBREEDING OVER THE MILLENNIA CAUSED THEM TO DECLINE IN INTELLIGENCE AND STRENGTH.
ULTIMATELY, MOST OF THEM LOSE EVEN THE ABILITY TO SPEAK.
OUR SCENE SHIFTS TO THE 6TH CENTURY A.D. ROMULUS AGUSTILUS, THE LAST EMPEROR OF ROME, IS DEPOSED AS A CHILD.
GROWN INTO AN ADULT, HE RAISES AN ARMY TO CONQUER A NEW KINGDOM-- ENGLAND, REALM OF KING ARTHUR!
BUT THE MAD EMPEROR, KNOWN BY HIS FOES AS TYRANNUS, MEETS HIS MATCH IN SIR PERCY OF SCANDIA THE ORIGINAL BLACK KNIGHT!

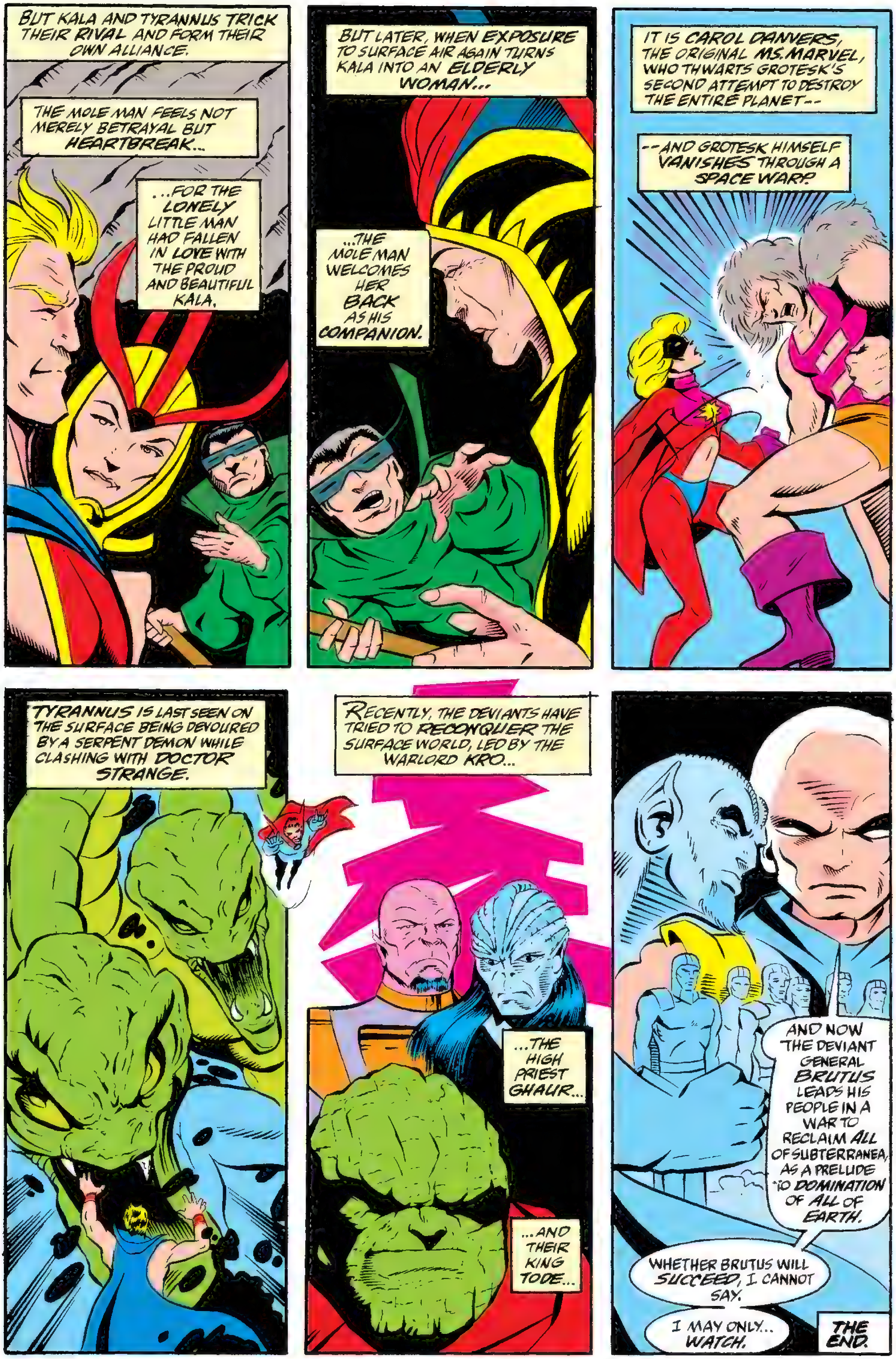

THE BLACK KNIGHT LEADS ARTHUR'S FORCES TO VICTORY, PERSONALLY OVERCOMING TYRANNUS HIMSELF.
SIR PERCY BRINGS THE FORMER EMPEROR TO JUDGEMENT BEFORE ARTHUR AND HIS ADVISOR MERLIN, GREATEST SORCERER OF THE AGE.
INSANE WITH RAGE, TYRANNUS SNARLS HIS DEFIANCE. "I WAS BORN TO RULE AN EMPIRE," HE THUNDERS--
"--AND NO UPSTART BRITONS CAN STOP ME FROM FULFILLING MY DESTINY!"
"YOU ARE MISTAKEN, MADMAN," SAID MERLIN. "WE INTEND TO HELP YOU FULFILL YOUR DESTINY IN A WAY THAT SHALL TROUBLE US NO MORE!"
WITH THAT, MERLIN UTTERS A DARK SPELL, MAKES A MYSTIC GESTURE--
--AND TYRANNUS VANISHES FROM CAMELOT...
...ONLY TO REAPPEAR WITHIN THE DISMAL UNDERWORLD OF SUBTERRANEA.
THIS IS TO BE TYRANNUS'S EMPIRE--
--AND THE ORANGE-SKINNED SUBTERRANEANS TO BE KNOWN AS THE TYRANNOIDS WILL BE HIS ONLY SUBJECTS!

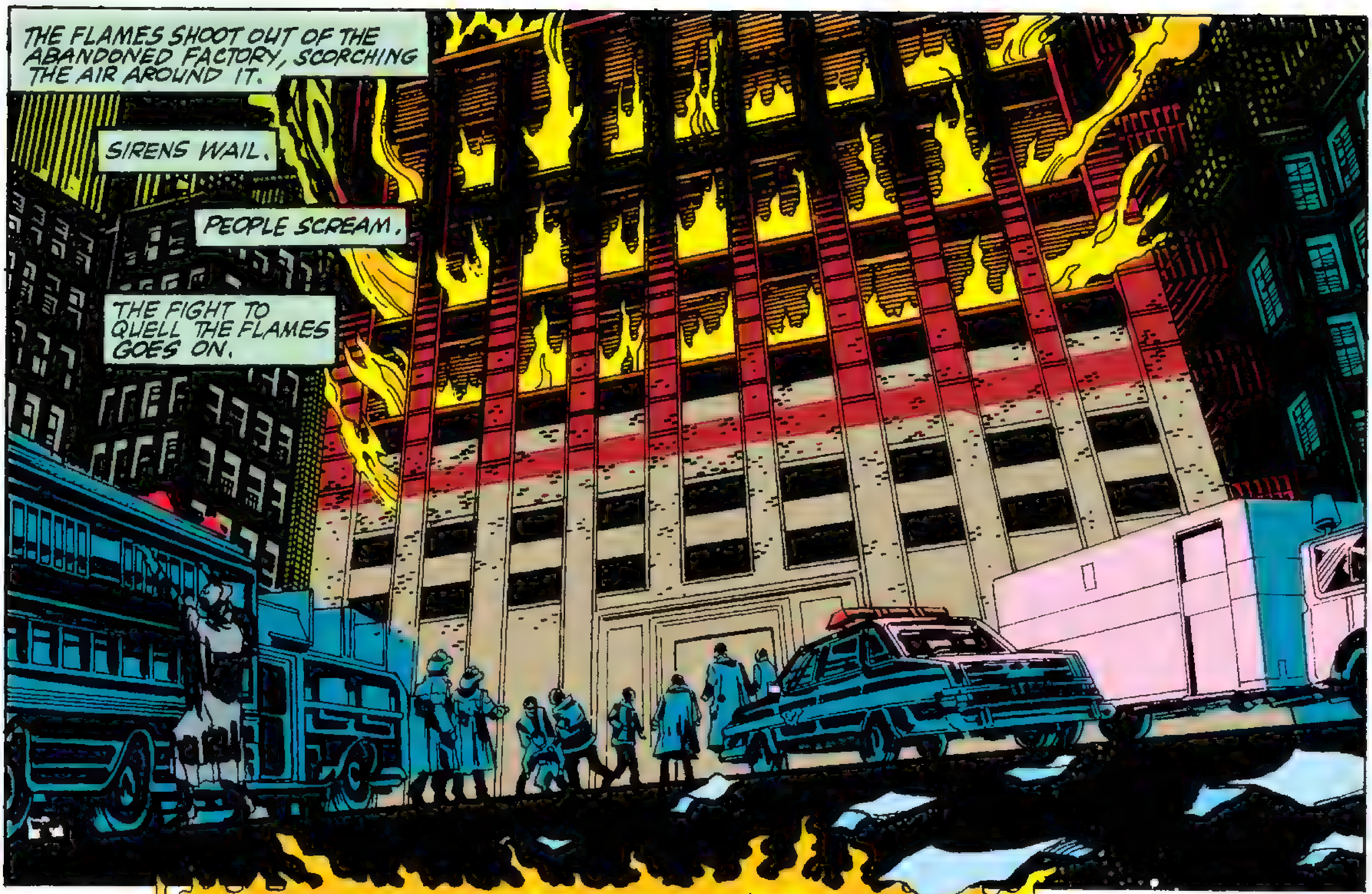

THE TYRANNOIDS COME FORWARD, WORSHIPFULLY.
AT LAST THEY FIND THE NEW MASTER THEY LONGED FOR.
TYRANNUS HIMSELF REFLECTS THAT THESE WERE NOT THE SUBJECTS HE HOPED FOR--
-- BUT THEY WOULD DO.
THE TYRANNOIDS SHOW THEIR NEW RULER THE ABANDONED DEVIANT MACHINES THEY HAD PRESERVED AND TENDED FOR MILLENNIA.
SO IT IS THAT TYRANNUS LEARNS TO MASTER FORMS OF SCIENCE UNDREAMED OF IN ANCIENT ROME.
TYRANNUS GLORIES IN HIS NEW ARMIES AND WEAPONS OF WAR--
--NOW HE HAS ENOUGH POWER TO DEFEAT ANY FOE--
-- SAVE FOR DEATH ITSELF.
AS DECADES PASS, TYRANNUS'S YOUTH, STRENGTH, AND HANDSOMENESS--
--CRUMBLE BEFORE THE ONSLAUGHT OF OLD AGE.
FINALLY, WHEN TYRANNUS LAY ON THE VERY BRINK OF DEATH--
--HIS LOYAL SLAVES IMMERSE HIM IN THE WATERS OF A MYSTERIOUS POOL.
... WHICH RAPIDLY RESTORES HIS YOUTH AND VIGOR!
THUS, THIS SAME POOL WILL PRESERVE HIS YOUTHFULNESS FOR CENTURIES TO COME!


NOW WE TURN TO EARTH'S SURFACE IN MORE RECENT TIMES, WHEN A GROTESQUE LITTLE MAN FINDS HIMSELF DRIVEN TO DESPAIR BY THE CRUELTY AND REJECTION OF HIS FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS.
IN ANGUISH, HE DECIDES TO ABANDON THE CIVILIZED WORLD AND FIND A REFUGE SOMEWHERE AT SEA.
BUT MISFORTUNE PURSUES HIM ON HIS LONELY QUEST.
A TERRIBLE STORM SINKS HIS BOAT. WASHING ASHORE ON THE UNCHARTED MONSTER ISLE, HE FALLS VICTIM TO AN AVALANCHE THAT RENDERS HIM NEARLY BLIND!
YET IT ALSO BRINGS HIM TO SUBTERRANEA WHERE HE ENCOUNTERS THE YELLOW-HUED RACE OF SUBTERRANEANS, WHO FIND IN HIM THEIR NEW RULER. HE, TOO, LEARNS TO MASTER THE ABANDONED MACHINES OF THE DEVIANTS--
--AS WELL AS THE MONSTERS SPAWNED BY THEIR GENETIC EXPERIMENTS--
--AND HE RENAMES HIMSELF THE MOLE MAN LORD OF THE MOLIAN SUBTERRANEANS!
NOW HE HAS THE POWER TO TAKE HIS VENGEANCE ON THE WORLD THAT SPURNS HIM...
...BUT HE IS REPEATEDLY THWARTED BY A NEW TEAM OF SUPER HEROES--
--THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
4
4
MEANWHILE, TYRANNUS LEARNS OF THE MODERN WORLD FROM RADIO AND TELEVISION SIGNALS AND VOWS TO CONQUER IT--
--ONLY TO HAVE HIS SCHEMES UPSET BY THE MONSTROUS HULK!


OTHER UNDERGROUND KINGDOMS LIKEWISE LEARN OF THE SURFACE WORLD AND PLOT TO CONQUER IT.
FIRST, QUEEN KALA OF THE NETHERWORLD KIDNAPS INVENTOR TONY STARK TO CREATE WEAPONRY FOR HER--
--BUT SHE IS UNAWARE THAT STARK HAD RECENTLY BECOME--
--THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN!
HE ABDUCTS KALA TO THE SURFACE WORLD WHERE EXPOSURE TO ITS AIR CAUSES HER TO AGE RAPIDLY--
IRON MAN THEN RETURNS KALA TO THE NETHERWORLD, WHERE SHE REGAINS HER YOUTH AND BEAUTY.
HE IS CONVINCED HER DREAMS OF CONQUEST ARE OVER.
HE IS WRONG.
THEN, THE LAVA MEN RISE AGAINST THE SURFACE WORLD--
--ONLY TO BE DRIVEN BACK BY THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
KING KRONO OF THE GORTOKIANS ALSO PLANS AN INVASION OF THE SURFACE WORLD...
...TO BE LED BY HIS WARRIOR SON PRINCE GOR-TOK--
--NAMESAKE OF THEIR HEROIC ANCESTOR.
BUT THEN, A SURFACE NATION STAGED AN UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR TEST THAT DEVASTATES THE ENTIRE GORTOKIAN RACE!

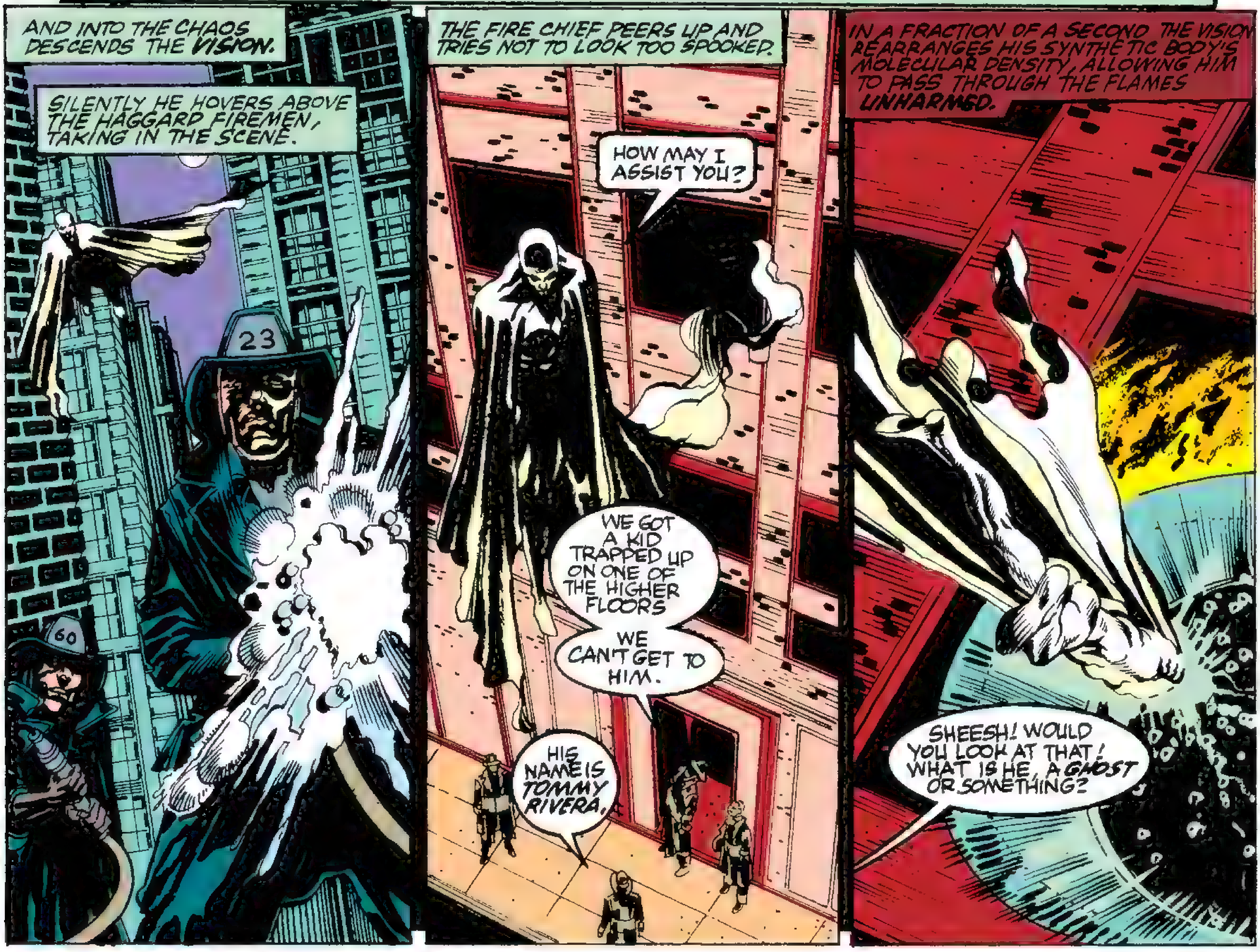

THOSE WHO ARE NOT KILLED OUTRIGHT DIE HORRIBLY FROM RADIATION POISONING.
THE LAST OF THE VICTIMS IS GOR-TOK'S BELOVED PRINCESS INGAR.
BUT GOR-TOK HIMSELF SURVIVES--
--HIS MIND AND BODY DISTORTED BY THE TERRIBLE RADIATION.
HE VOWS TO TAKE HIS VENGEANCE BY DESTROYING THE ENTIRE SURFACE WORLD!
ELSEWHERE TYRANNUS AND THE MOLE MAN FIGHT A NEVER-ENDING SERIES OF WARS FOR MASTERY OF SUBTERRANEA...
...AND FORCING PAWNS LIKE THE X-MEN AND HULK TO DO THEIR BIDDING.
...PITTING GIANT ROBOT WARRIORS AGAINST EACH OTHER...
THE X-MEN FOIL THE FIRST ATTEMPT AT GENOCIDE BY MAD PRINCE GOR-TOK--
--WHO NOW CALLS HIMSELF GROTESK.
LATER, THE MOLE MAN THINKS HE HAS FINALLY TRIUMPHED OVER TYRANNUS BY ALLYING HIMSELF WITH KALA AND REDUCING HIS FOE TO MESMERIZED SERVITUDE.

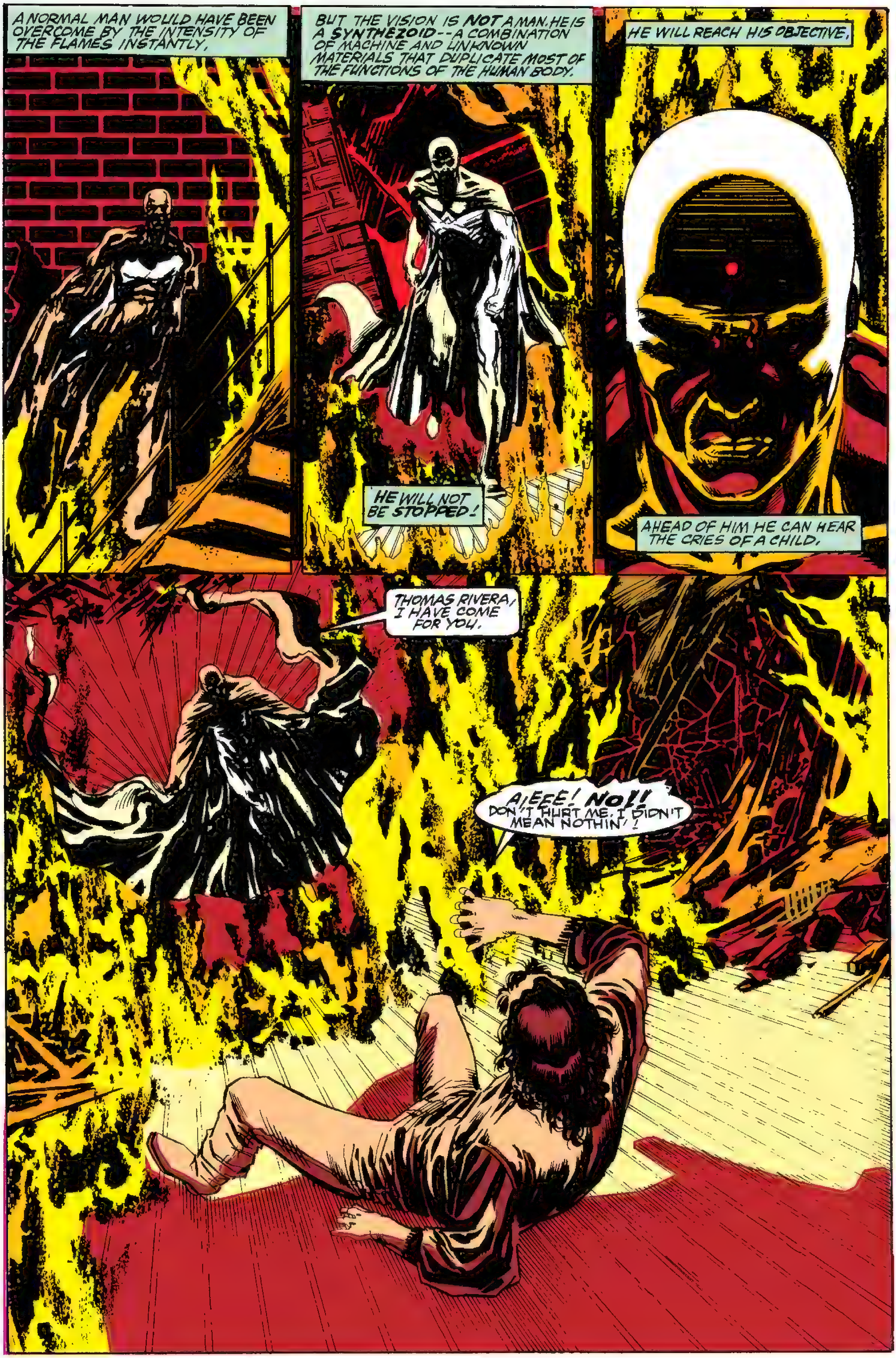

BUT KALA AND TYRANNUS TRICK THEIR RIVAL AND FORM THEIR OWN ALLIANCE.
THE MOLE MAN FEELS NOT MERELY BETRAYAL BUT HEARTBREAK...
...FOR THE LONELY LITTLE MAN HAD FALLEN IN LOVE WITH THE PROUD AND BEAUTIFUL KALA.
BUT LATER, WHEN EXPOSURE TO SURFACE AIR AGAIN TURNS KALA INTO AN ELDERLY WOMAN...
...THE MOLE MAN WELCOMES HER BACK AS HIS COMPANION.
IT IS CAROL DANVERS, THE ORIGINAL MS. MARVEL, WHO THWARTS GROTESK'S SECOND ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THE ENTIRE PLANET--
--AND GROTESK HIMSELF VANISHES THROUGH A SPACE WARP.
TYRANNUS IS LAST SEEN ON THE SURFACE BEING DEVOURED BY A SERPENT DEMON WHILE CLASHING WITH DOCTOR STRANGE.
RECENTLY, THE DEVIANTS HAVE TRIED TO RECONQUER THE SURFACE WORLD, LED BY THE WARLORD KRO...
...THE HIGH PRIEST GHAUR...
...AND THEIR KING TODE...
AND NOW THE DEVIANT GENERAL BRUTUS LEADS HIS PEOPLE IN A WAR TO RECLAIM ALL OF SUBTERRANEA, AS A PRELUDE TO DOMINATION OF ALL OF EARTH.
WHETHER BRUTUS WILL SUCCEED, I CANNOT SAY.
I MAY ONLY... WATCH.
THE END.


THE FLAMES SHOOT OUT OF THE ABANDONED FACTORY, SCORCHING THE AIR AROUND IT.
SIRENS WAIL.
PEOPLE SCREAM.
THE FIGHT TO QUELL THE FLAMES GOES ON.

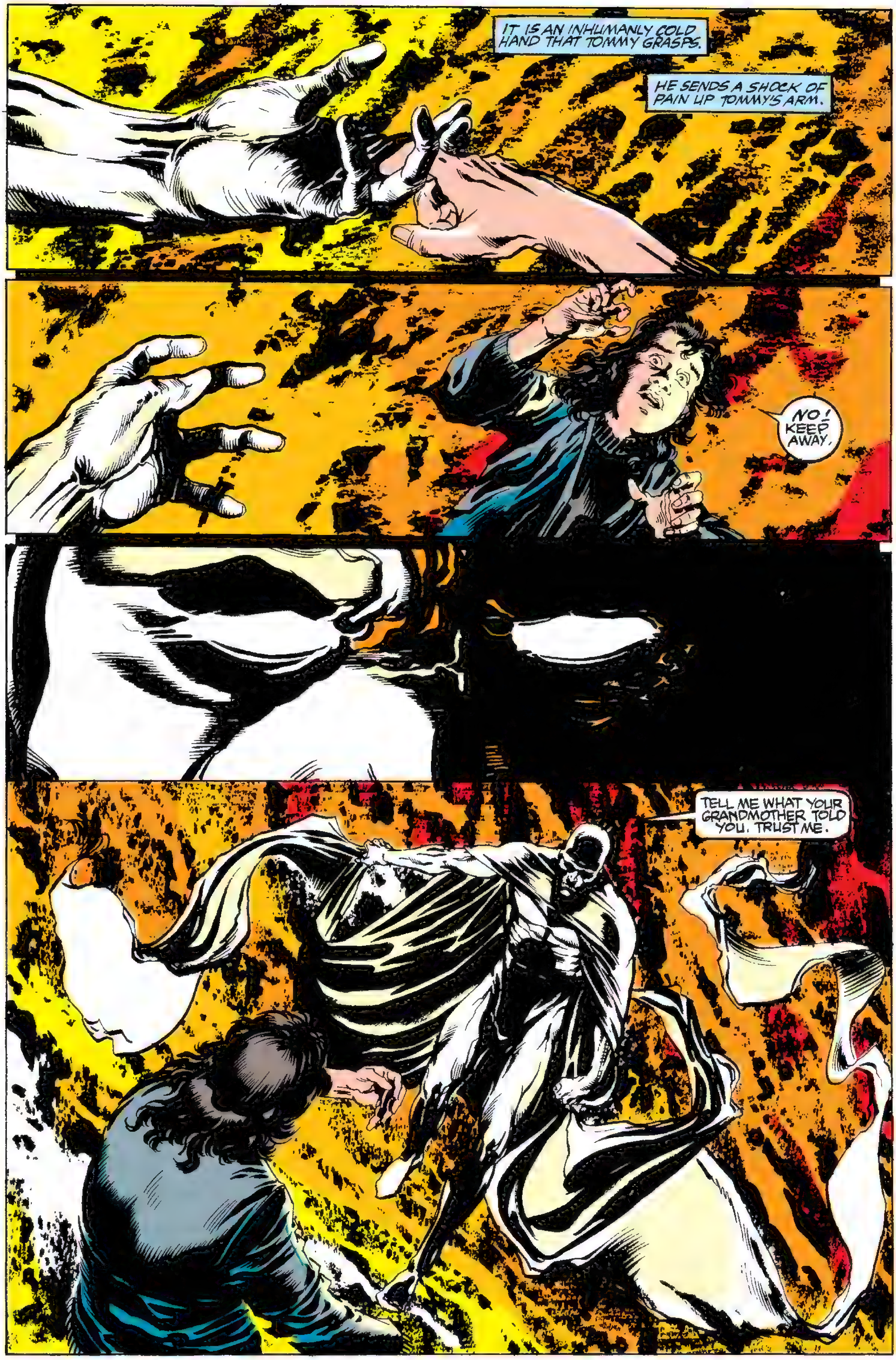
BURNING VISION

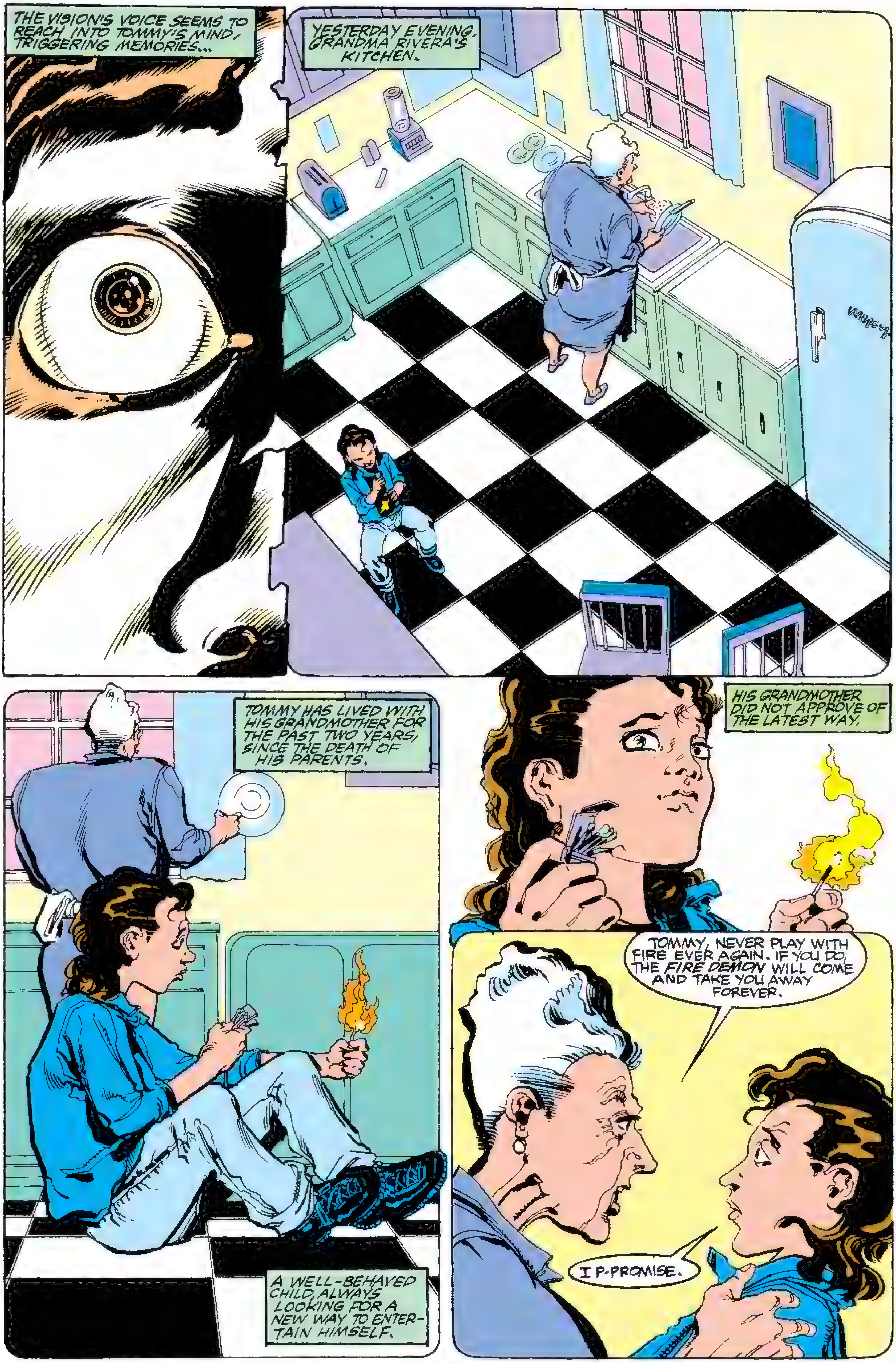
ERIC FEIN • MICHAEL BAIR • YUG • GREG WRIGHT • HOWARD MACKIE + RALPH MACCHIO • TOM DeFALCO
WRITER ARTIST LETTERER COLORIST EDITORS FIRE PLUG

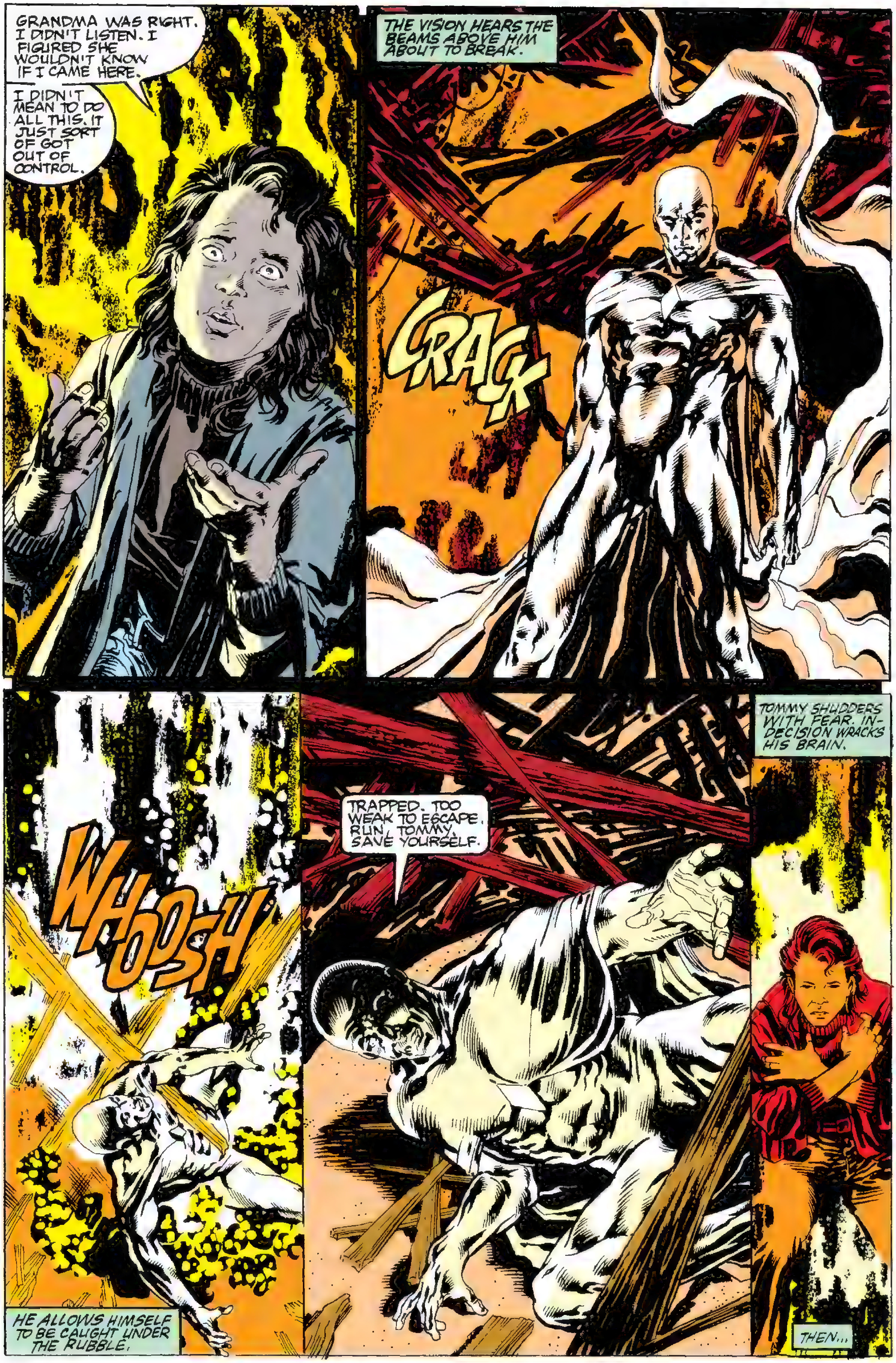

AND INTO THE CHAOS DESCENDS THE VISION.
SILENTLY HE HOVERS ABOVE THE HAGGARD FIREMEN, TAKING IN THE SCENE.
23
60
THE FIRE CHIEF PEERS UP AND TRIES NOT TO LOOK TOO SPOOKED.
HOW MAY I ASSIST YOU?
WE GOT A KID TRAPPED UP ON ONE OF THE HIGHER FLOORS.
WE CAN'T GET TO HIM.
HIS NAME IS TOMMY RIVERA.
IN A FRACTION OF A SECOND THE VISION REARRANGES HIS SYNTHETIC BODY'S MOLECULAR DENSITY, ALLOWING HIM TO PASS THROUGH THE FLAMES UNHARMED.
SHEESH! WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT! WHAT IS HE, A GHOST OR SOMETHING?

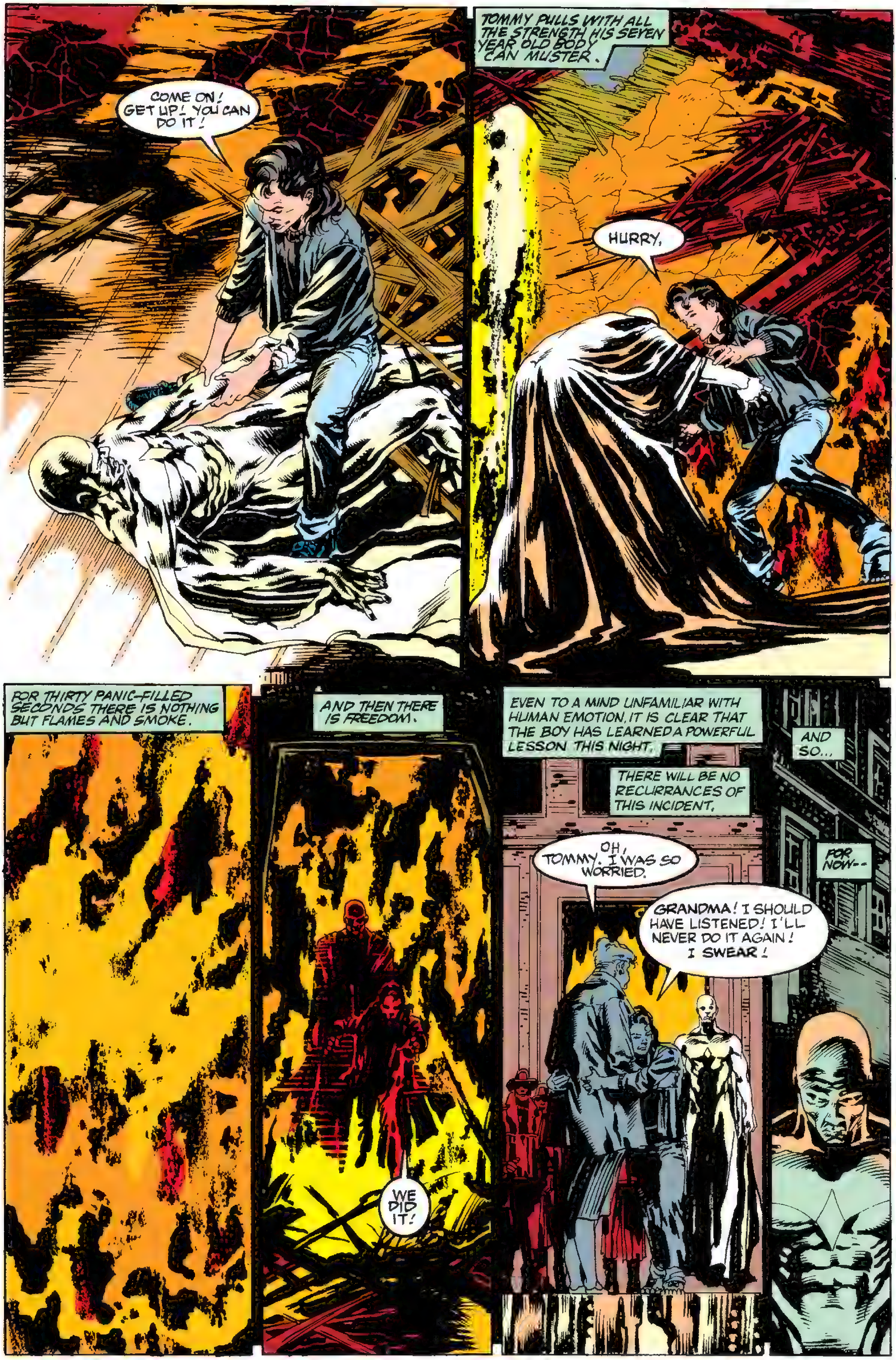

A NORMAL MAN WOULD HAVE BEEN OVERCOME BY THE INTENSITY OF THE FLAMES INSTANTLY.
BUT THE VISION IS **NOT** A MAN. HE IS A **SYNTHEZOID**--A COMBINATION OF MACHINE AND UNKNOWN MATERIALS THAT DUPLICATE MOST OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE HUMAN BODY.
HE WILL NOT BE **STOPPED!**
HE WILL REACH HIS OBJECTIVE.
AHEAD OF HIM HE CAN HEAR THE CRIES OF A CHILD.
THOMAS RIVERA, I HAVE COME FOR YOU.
AIEEE! NO!! DON'T HURT ME. I DIDN'T MEAN NOTHIN'!

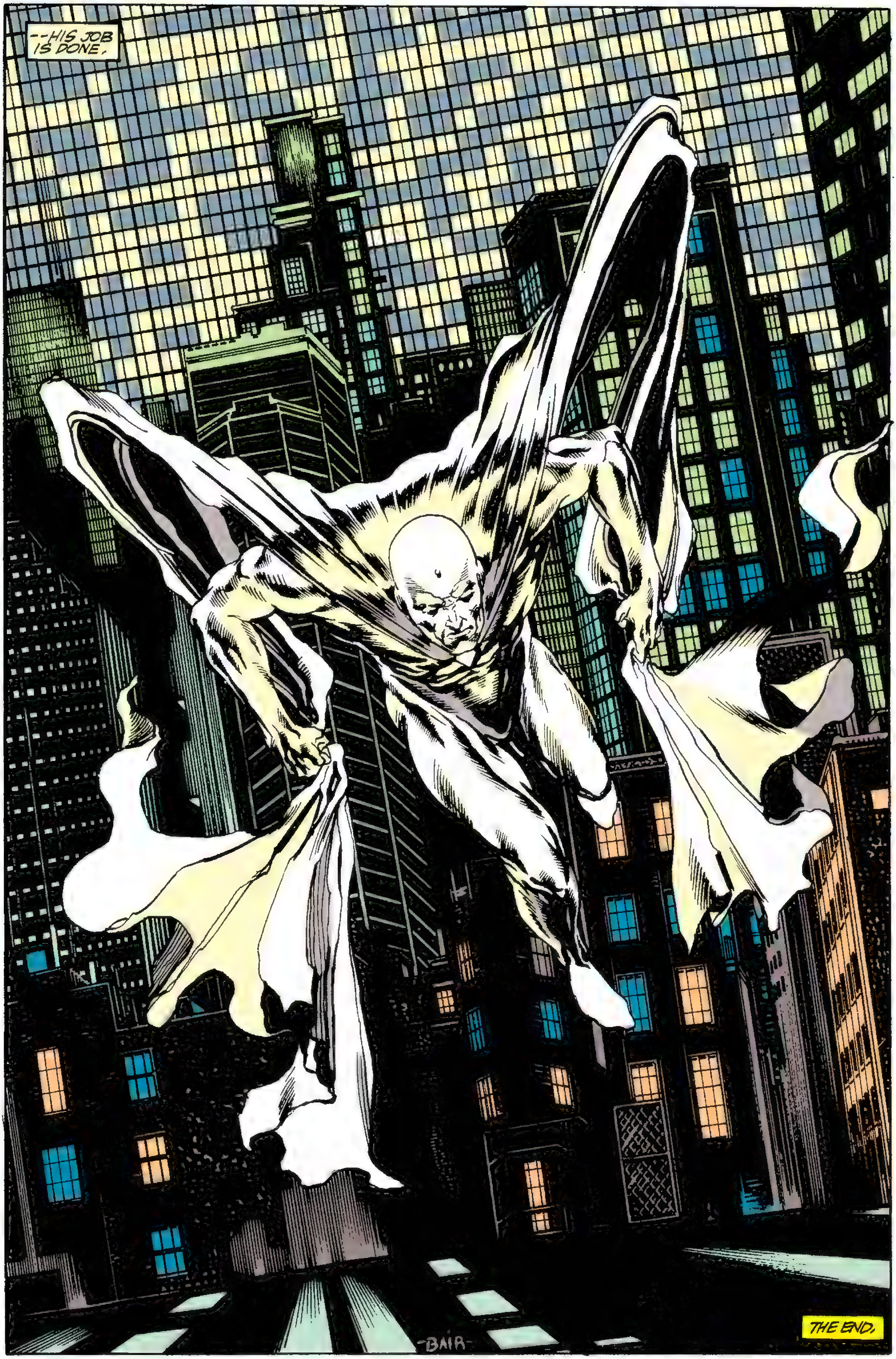
QUICKLY, CHILD, COME TO ME.
NO! GO AWAY. I WANT MY GRANDMA.
I WILL TAKE YOU TO HER.
YOU LIE. YOU'RE THE FIRE DEMON SHE TOLD ME ABOUT!
I AM HERE TO HELP YOU.
YOU'RE TRYING TO TRICK ME.
I AM THE VISION.
I AM AN AVENGER.
I AM NOT LYING.
NOW, TAKE MY HAND AND WE WILL BE GONE.
I DON'T KNOW...

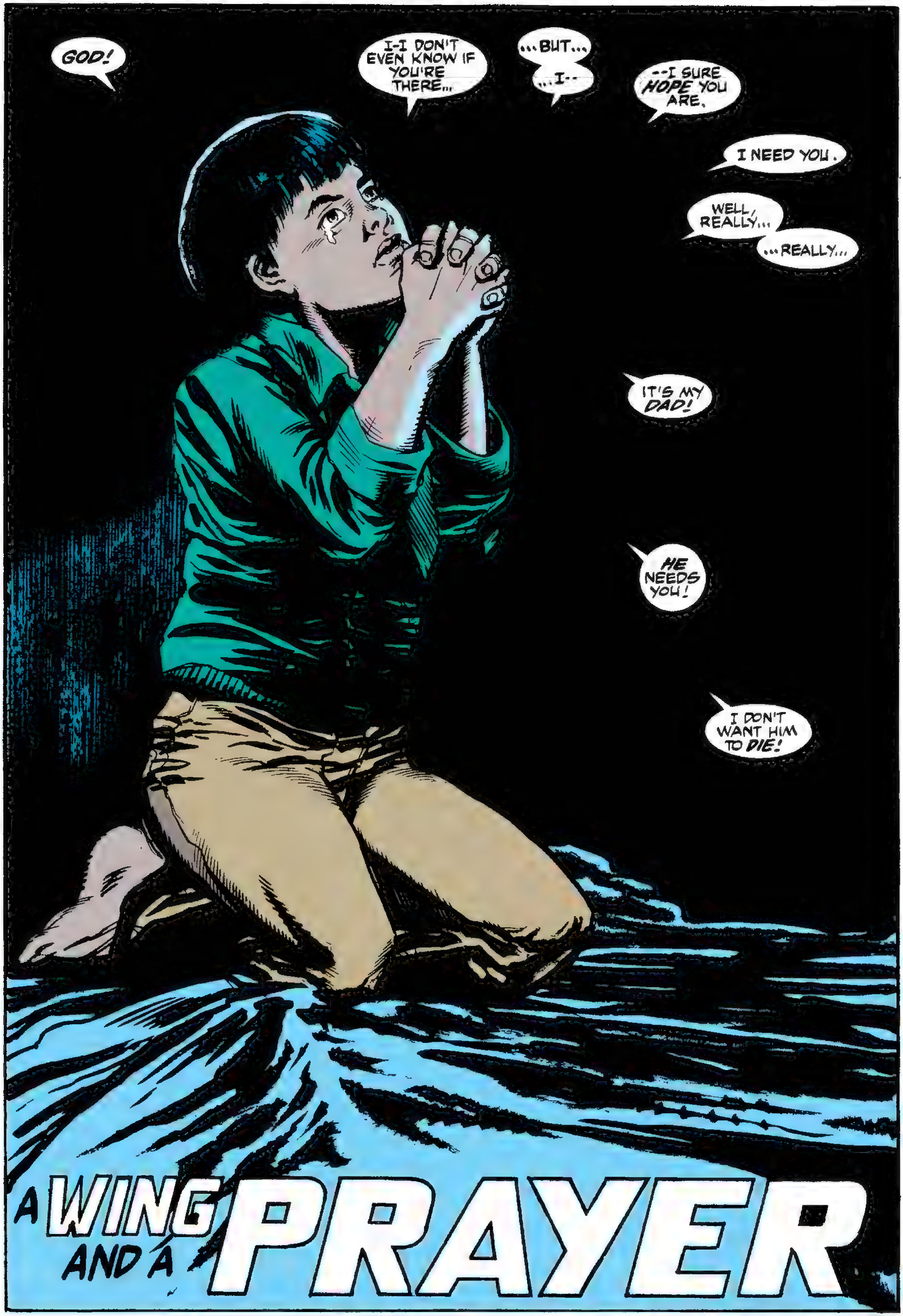

IT IS AN INHUMANLY COLD HAND THAT TOMMY GRASPS.
HE SENDS A SHOCK OF PAIN UP TOMMY'S ARM.
NO! KEEP AWAY.
TELL ME WHAT YOUR GRANDMOTHER TOLD YOU. TRUST ME.


THE VISION'S VOICE SEEMS TO REACH INTO TOMMY'S MIND, TRIGGERING MEMORIES...
YESTERDAY EVENING, GRANDMA RIVERA'S KITCHEN.
TOMMY HAS LIVED WITH HIS GRANDMOTHER FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, SINCE THE DEATH OF HIS PARENTS.
A WELL-BEHAVED CHILD, ALWAYS LOOKING FOR A NEW WAY TO ENTERTAIN HIMSELF.
HIS GRANDMOTHER DID NOT APPROVE OF THE LATEST WAY.
TOMMY, NEVER PLAY WITH FIRE EVER AGAIN. IF YOU DO, THE FIRE DEMON WILL COME AND TAKE YOU AWAY FOREVER.
I P-PROMISE.

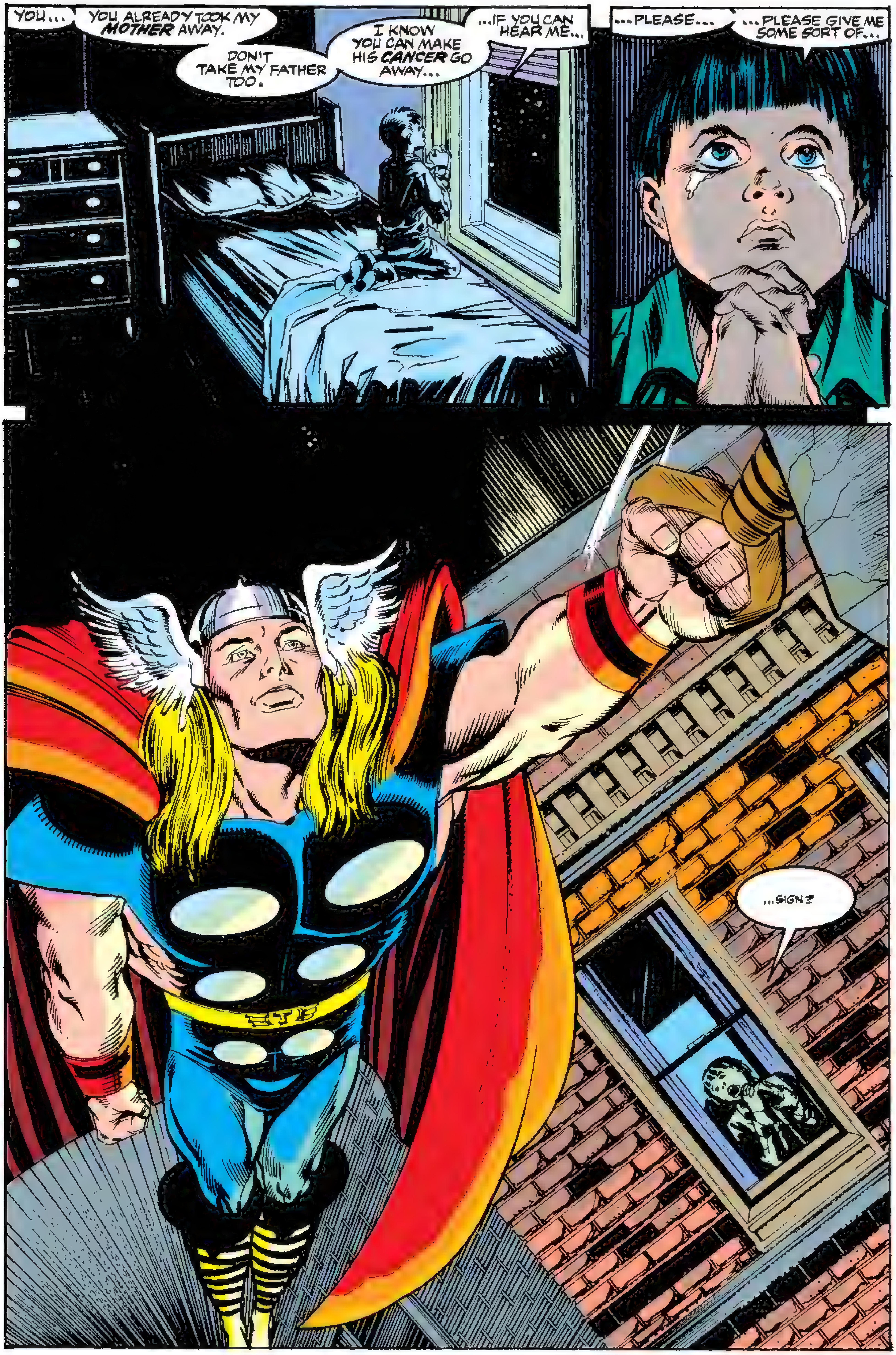

GRANDMA WAS RIGHT. I DIDN'T LISTEN. I FIGURED SHE WOULDN'T KNOW IF I CAME HERE.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO DO ALL THIS. IT JUST SORT OF GOT OUT OF CONTROL.
THE VISION HEARS THE BEAMS ABOVE HIM ABOUT TO BREAK.
CRACK
WHOOSH
HE ALLOWS HIMSELF TO BE CAUGHT UNDER THE RUBBLE.
TRAPPED. TOO WEAK TO ESCAPE. RUN, TOMMY, SAVE YOURSELF.
TOMMY SHUDDERS WITH FEAR. INDECISION WRACKS HIS BRAIN.
THEN...

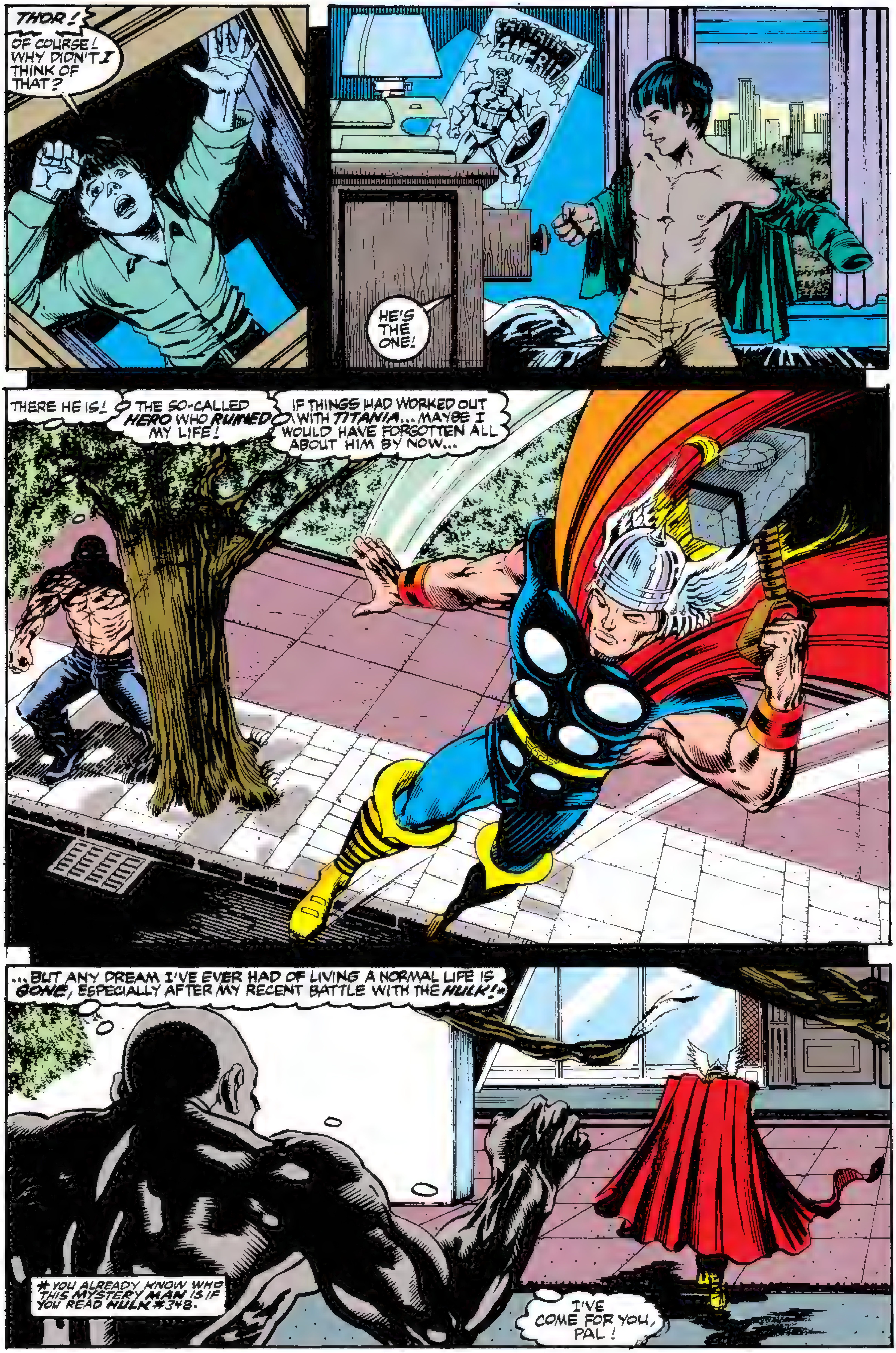

COME ON! GET UP! YOU CAN DO IT!
TOMMY PULLS WITH ALL THE STRENGTH HIS SEVEN YEAR OLD BODY CAN MUSTER.
HURRY,
FOR THIRTY PANIC-FILLED SECONDS THERE IS NOTHING BUT FLAMES AND SMOKE.
AND THEN THERE IS FREEDOM.
WE DID IT!
EVEN TO A MIND UNFAMILIAR WITH HUMAN EMOTION, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE BOY HAS LEARNED A POWERFUL LESSON THIS NIGHT,
THERE WILL BE NO RECURRANCES OF THIS INCIDENT,
OH, TOMMY. I WAS SO WORRIED.
GRANDMA! I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED! I'LL NEVER DO IT AGAIN! I SWEAR!
AND SO...
FOR NOW--

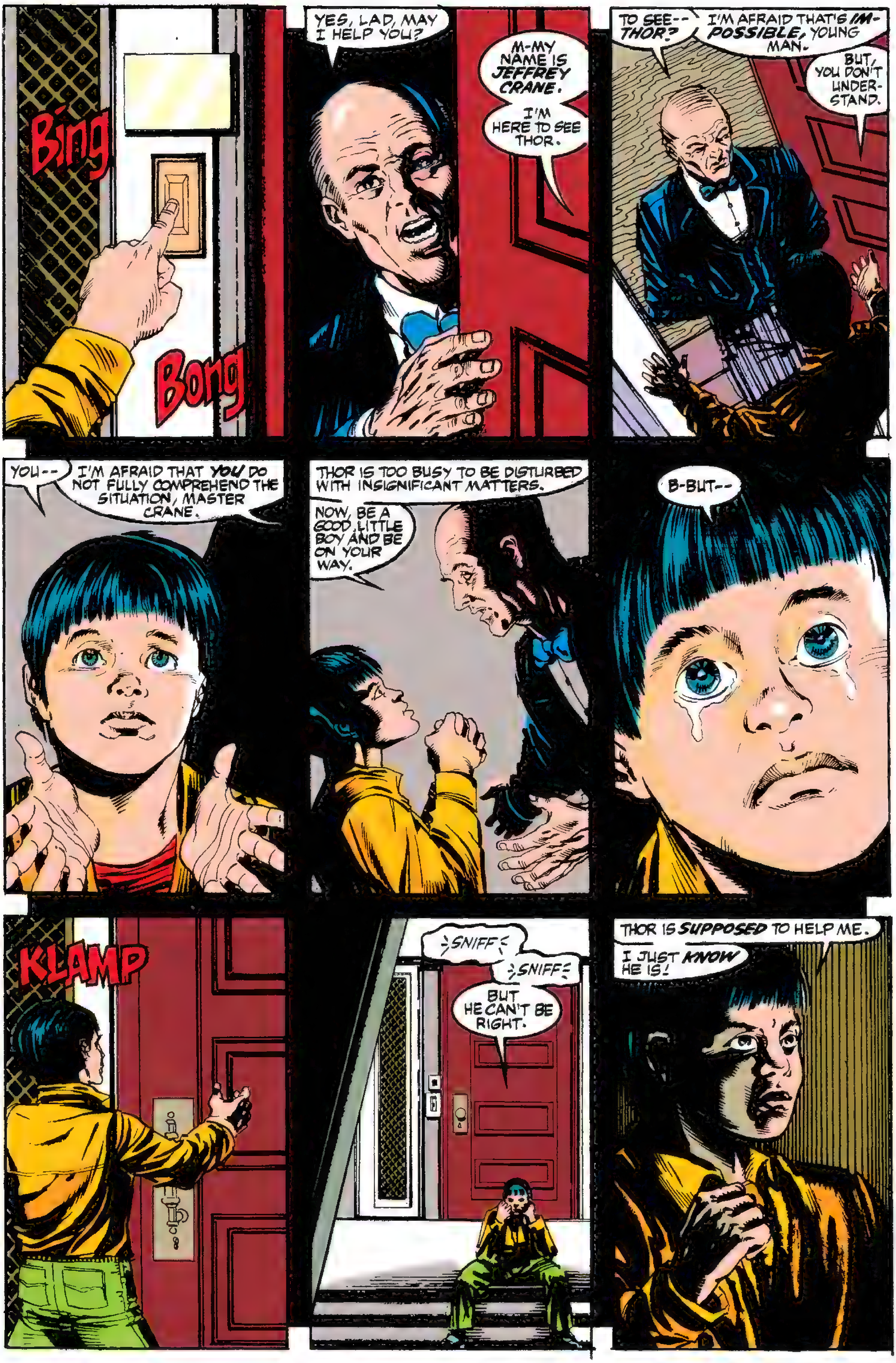

--HIS JOB IS DONE.
THE END.
-BAIR-

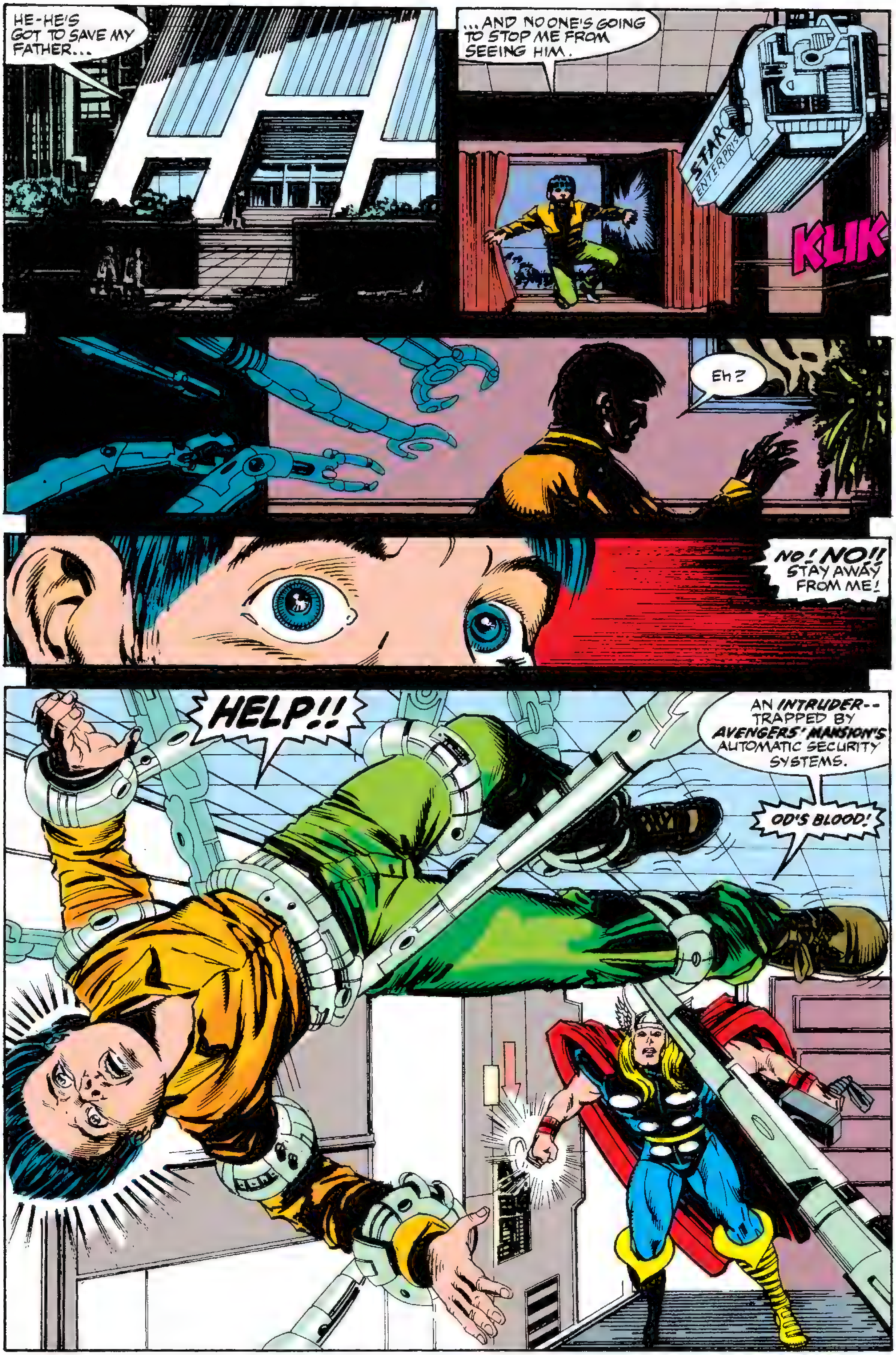

GOD!
I-I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF YOU'RE THERE...
...BUT...
...I--
--I SURE HOPE YOU ARE.
I NEED YOU.
WELL, REALLY...
...REALLY...
IT'S MY DAD!
HE NEEDS YOU!
I DON'T WANT HIM TO DIE!
A WING AND A PRAYER

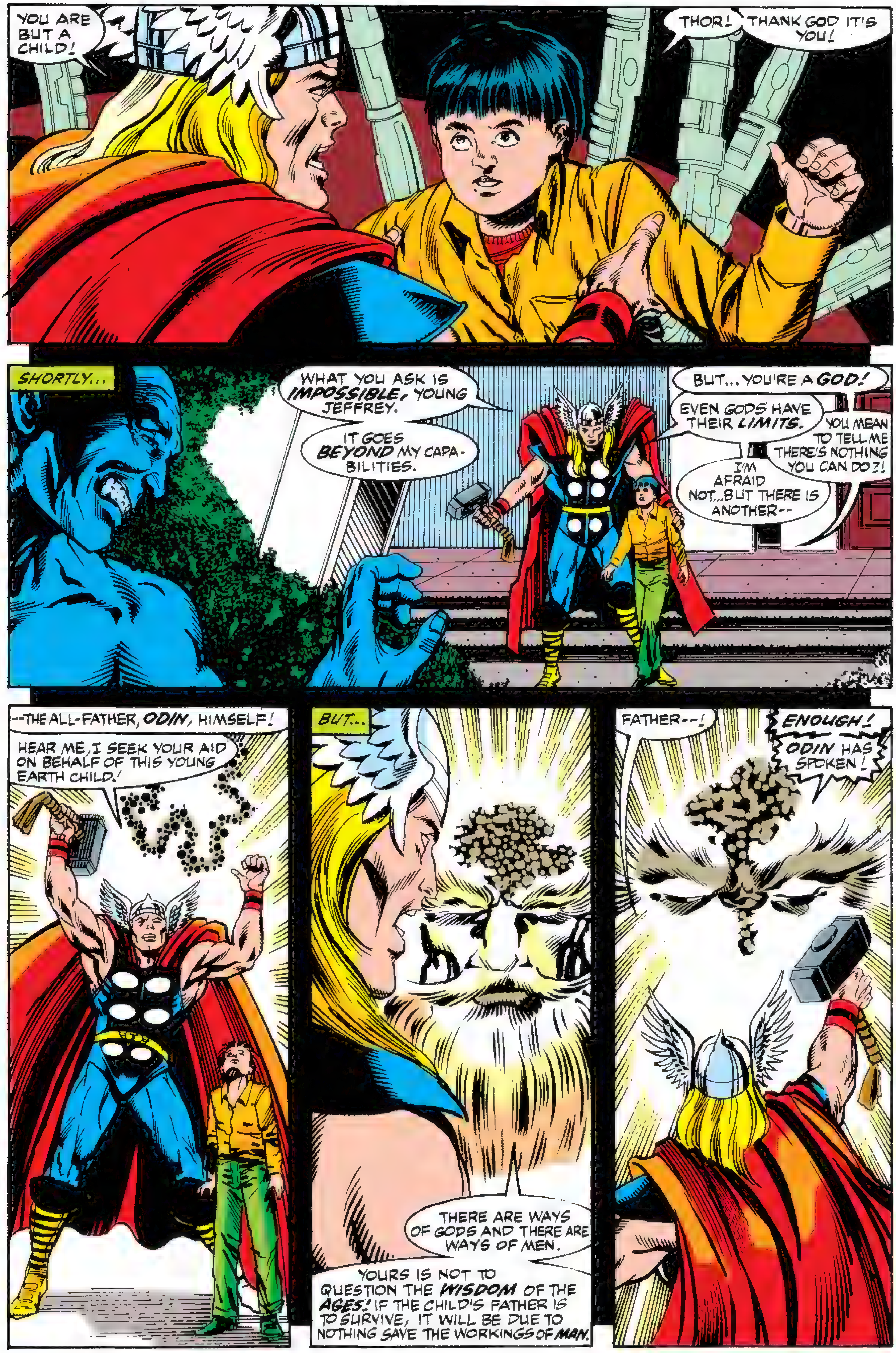
MICHAEL HIGGINS WRITER & LETTERER • **ED MURR**-DEBUT PENCILER • **MIKE BAIR**-INKER
STEVE BUCCELLATO-COLORIST • *THIS STORY TAKES PLACE BEFORE RECENT OCCURRENCES IN THOR'S OWN CONTINUITY*

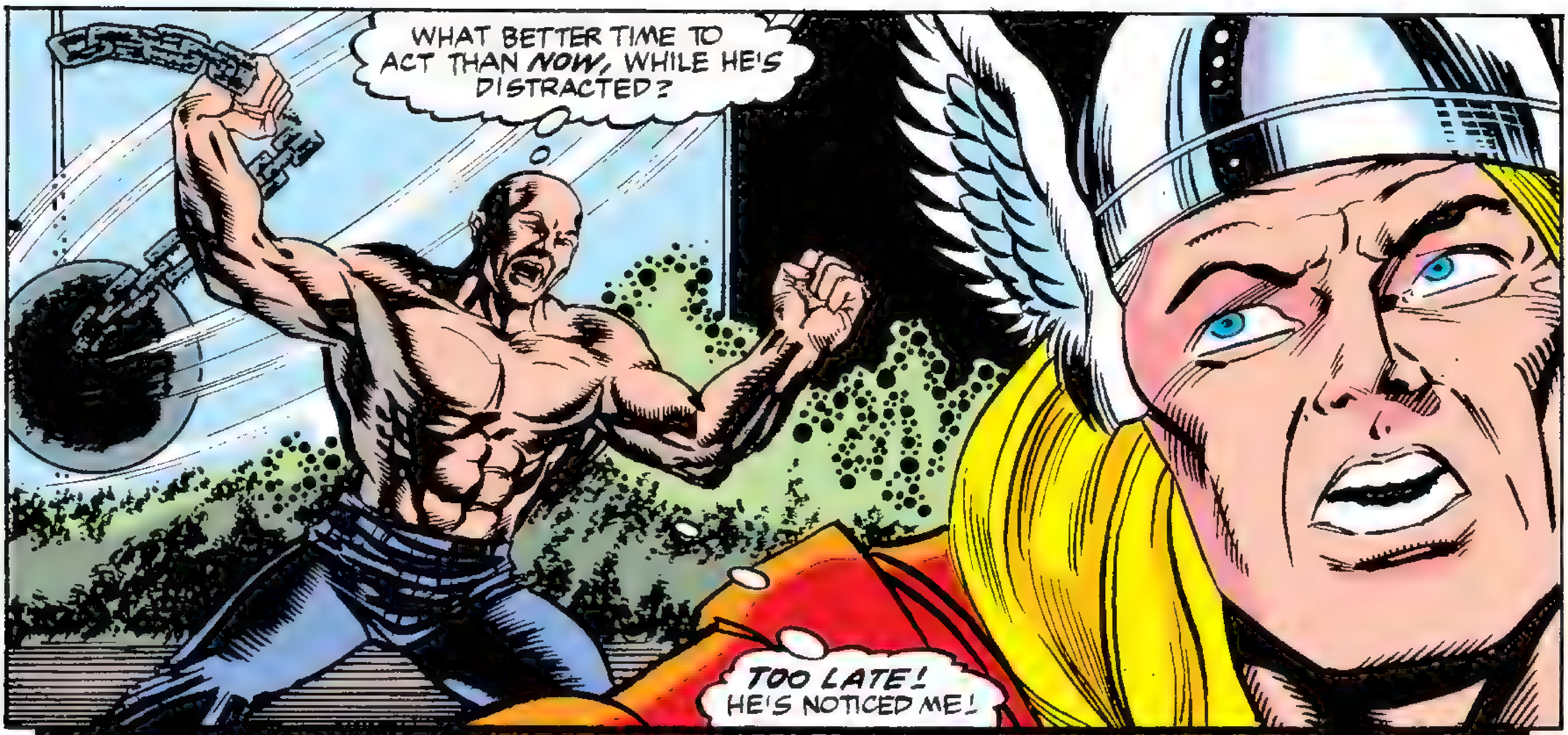

YOU...
YOU ALREADY TOOK MY **MOTHER** AWAY.
DON'T TAKE MY FATHER TOO.
I KNOW YOU CAN MAKE HIS **CANCER** GO AWAY...
...IF YOU CAN HEAR ME...
...PLEASE...
...PLEASE GIVE ME SOME SORT OF...
...SIGN?

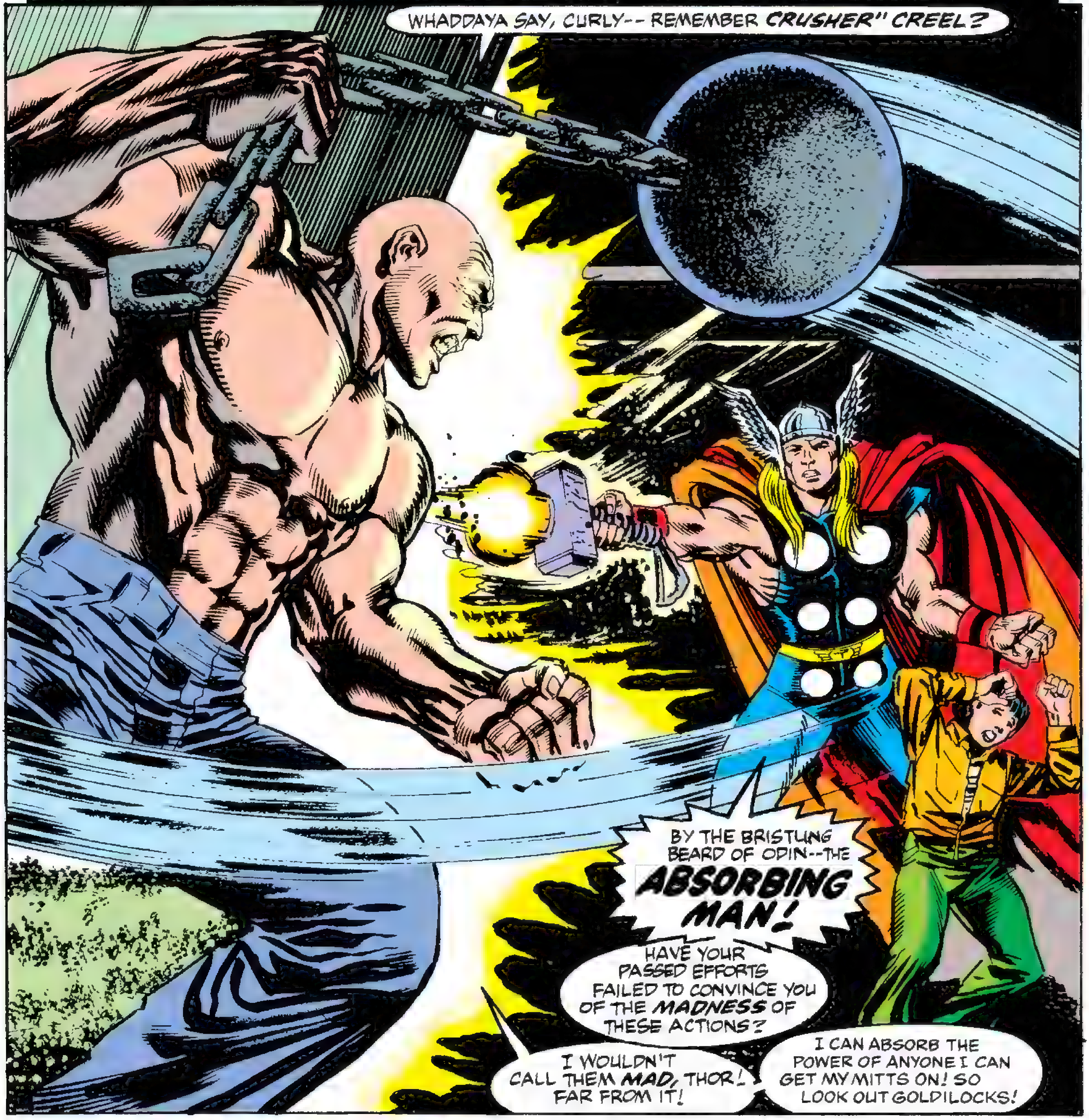

THOR! OF COURSE! WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT?
HE'S THE ONE!
THERE HE IS! THE SO-CALLED HERO WHO RUINED MY LIFE!
IF THINGS HAD WORKED OUT WITH TITANIA... MAYBE I WOULD HAVE FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT HIM BY NOW...
...BUT ANY DREAM I'VE EVER HAD OF LIVING A NORMAL LIFE IS GONE, ESPECIALLY AFTER MY RECENT BATTLE WITH THE HULK!*
*YOU ALREADY KNOW WHO THIS MYSTERY MAN IS IF YOU READ HULK #348.
I'VE COME FOR YOU, PAL!

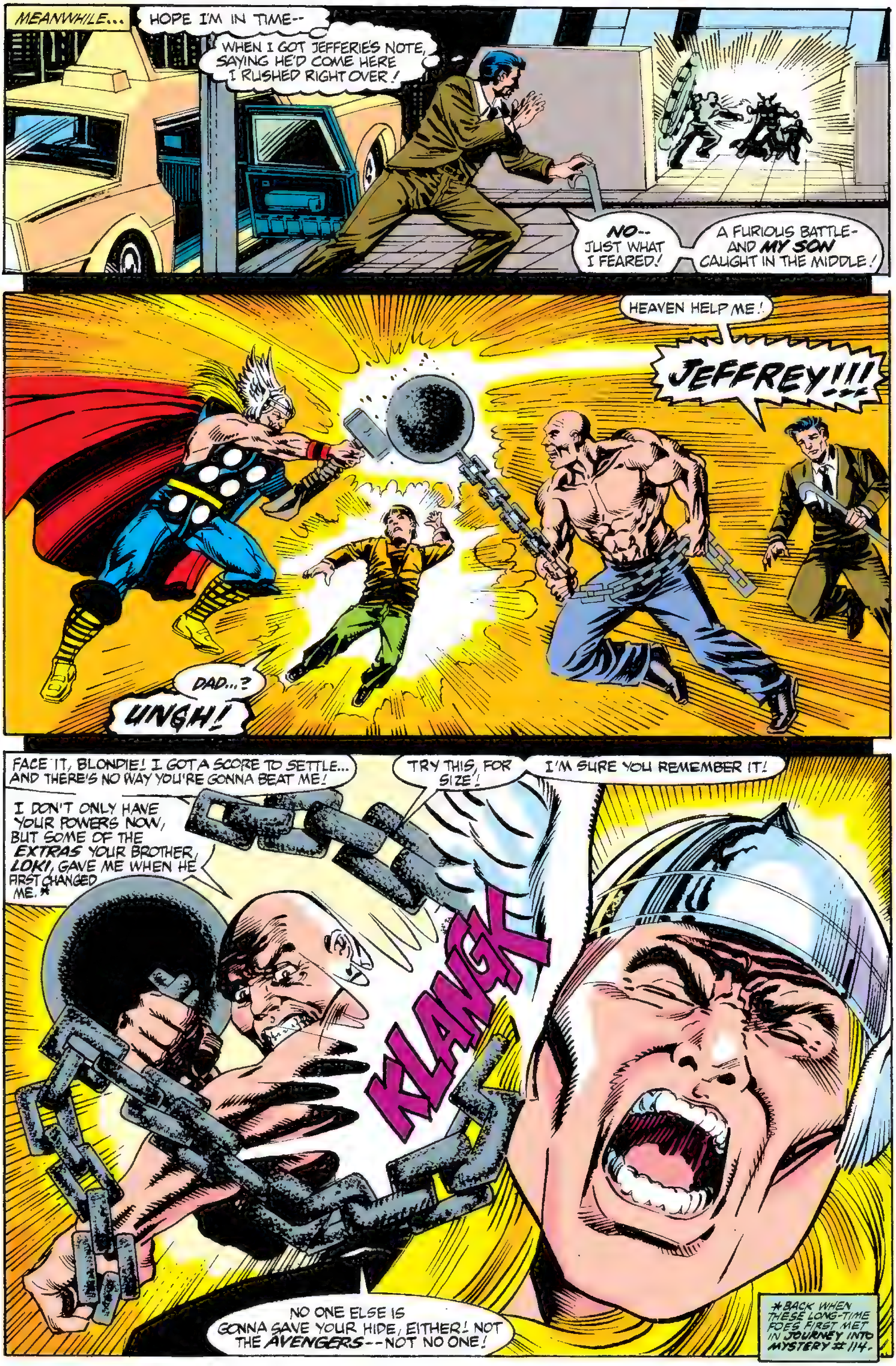

Bing
Bong
YES, LAD, MAY I HELP YOU?
M-MY NAME IS JEFFREY CRANE.
I'M HERE TO SEE THOR.
TO SEE--THOR?
I'M AFRAID THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, YOUNG MAN.
BUT, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.
YOU--
I'M AFRAID THAT YOU DO NOT FULLY COMPREHEND THE SITUATION, MASTER CRANE.
THOR IS TOO BUSY TO BE DISTURBED WITH INSIGNIFICANT MATTERS.
NOW, BE A GOOD, LITTLE BOY AND BE ON YOUR WAY.
B-BUT--
KLAMP
SNIFF
SNIFF
BUT HE CAN'T BE RIGHT.
THOR IS SUPPOSED TO HELP ME.
I JUST KNOW HE IS!

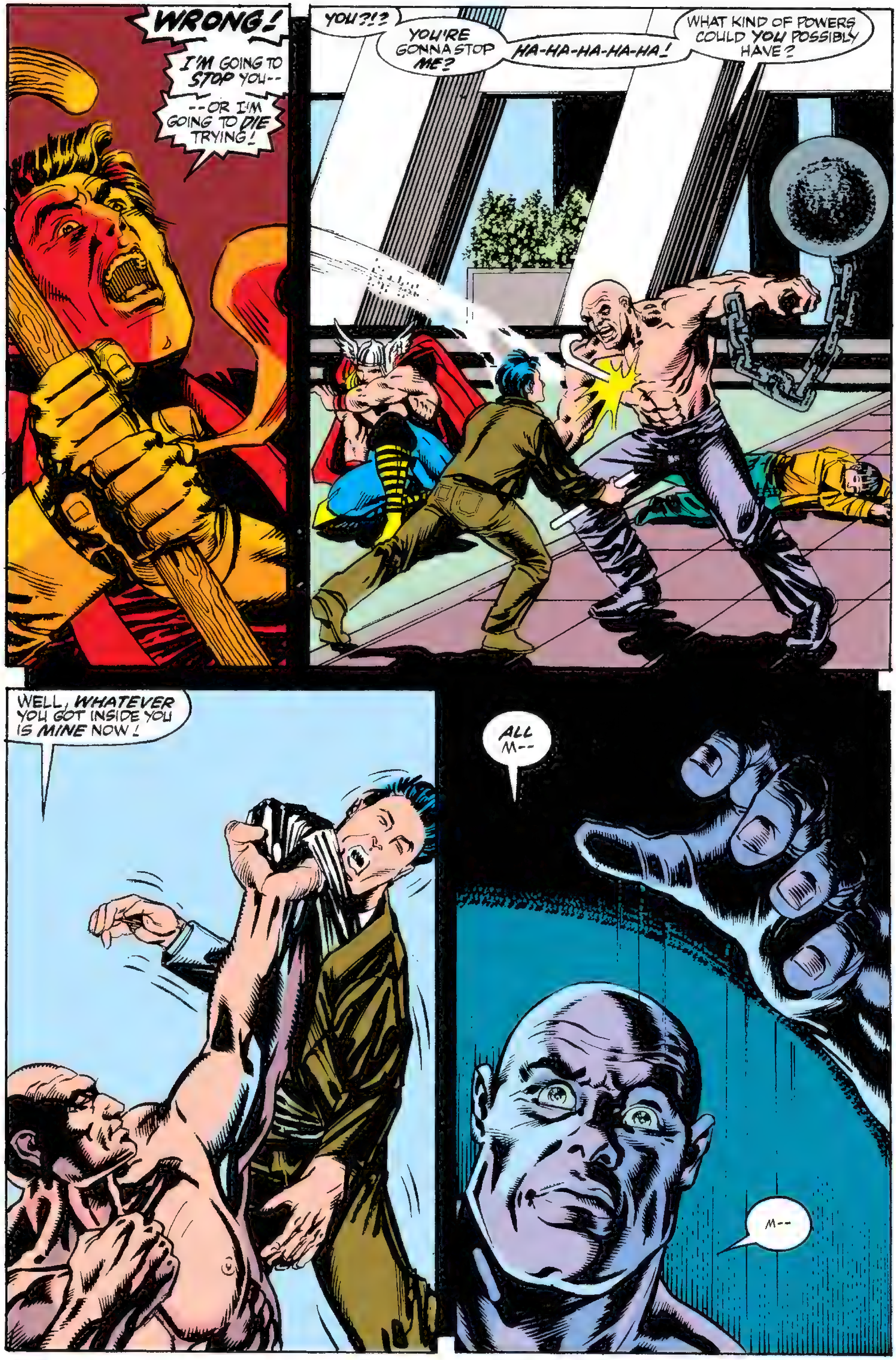

HE-HE'S GOT TO SAVE MY FATHER...
...AND NO ONE'S GOING TO STOP ME FROM SEEING HIM.
STAR ENTERPRIS
KLIK
Eh?
NO! NO!! STAY AWAY FROM ME!
HELP!!
AN *INTRUDER*-- TRAPPED BY ***AVENGERS' MANSION'S*** AUTOMATIC SECURITY SYSTEMS.
OD'S BLOOD!

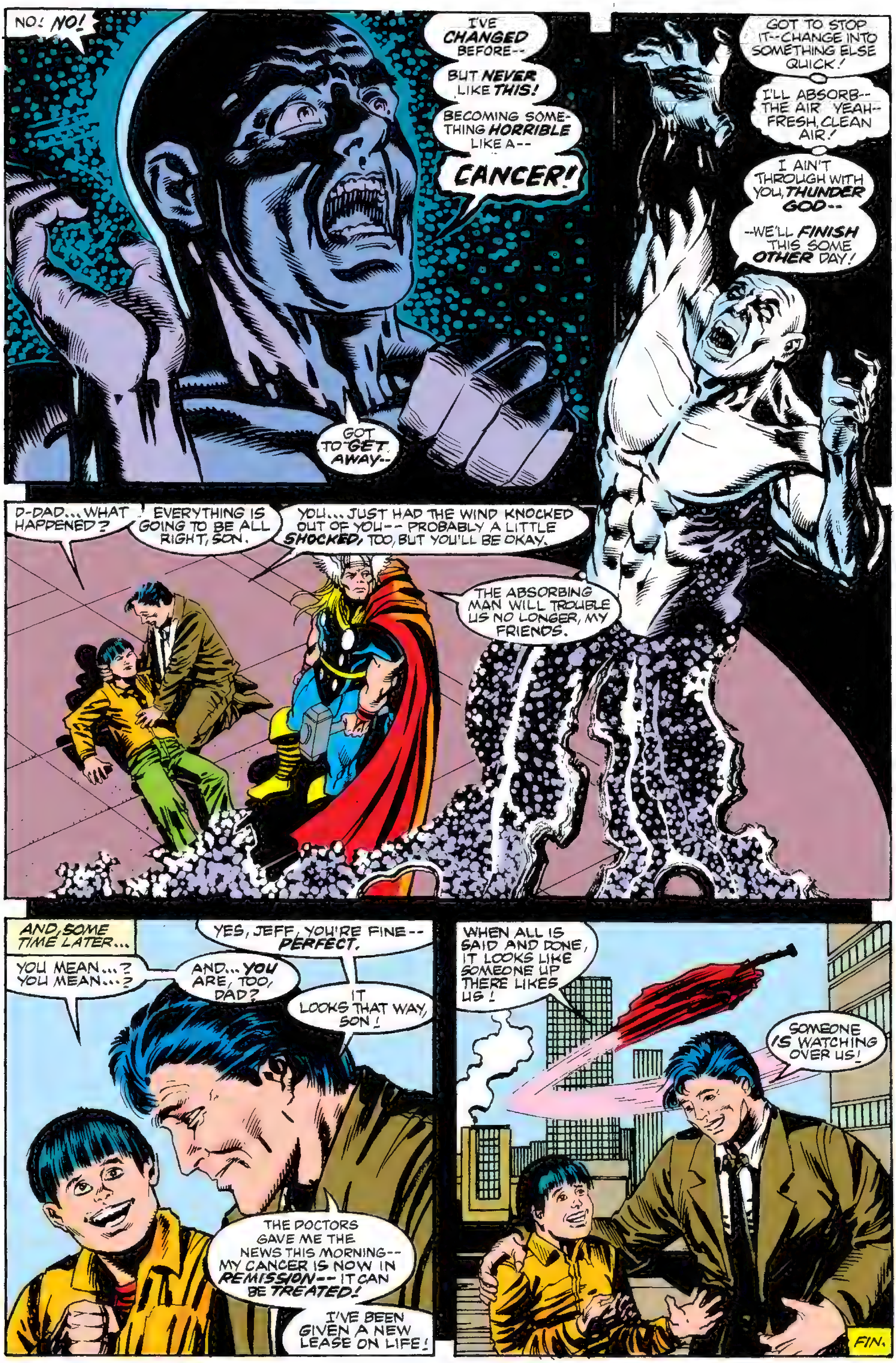

YOU ARE BUT A CHILD!
THOR!
THANK GOD IT'S YOU!
SHORTLY...
WHAT YOU ASK IS *IMPOSSIBLE*, YOUNG JEFFREY.
IT GOES *BEYOND* MY CAPABILITIES.
BUT... YOU'RE A *GOD!*
EVEN GODS HAVE THEIR *LIMITS*.
YOU MEAN TO TELL ME THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO?!
I'M AFRAID NOT...BUT THERE IS ANOTHER--
--THE ALL-FATHER, *ODIN*, HIMSELF!
HEAR ME, I SEEK YOUR AID ON BEHALF OF THIS YOUNG EARTH CHILD!
BUT...
THERE ARE WAYS OF GODS AND THERE ARE WAYS OF MEN.
YOURS IS NOT TO QUESTION THE *WISDOM* OF THE *AGES!* IF THE CHILD'S FATHER IS TO SURVIVE, IT WILL BE DUE TO NOTHING SAVE THE WORKINGS OF *MAN*.
FATHER--!
ENOUGH!
ODIN HAS SPOKEN!

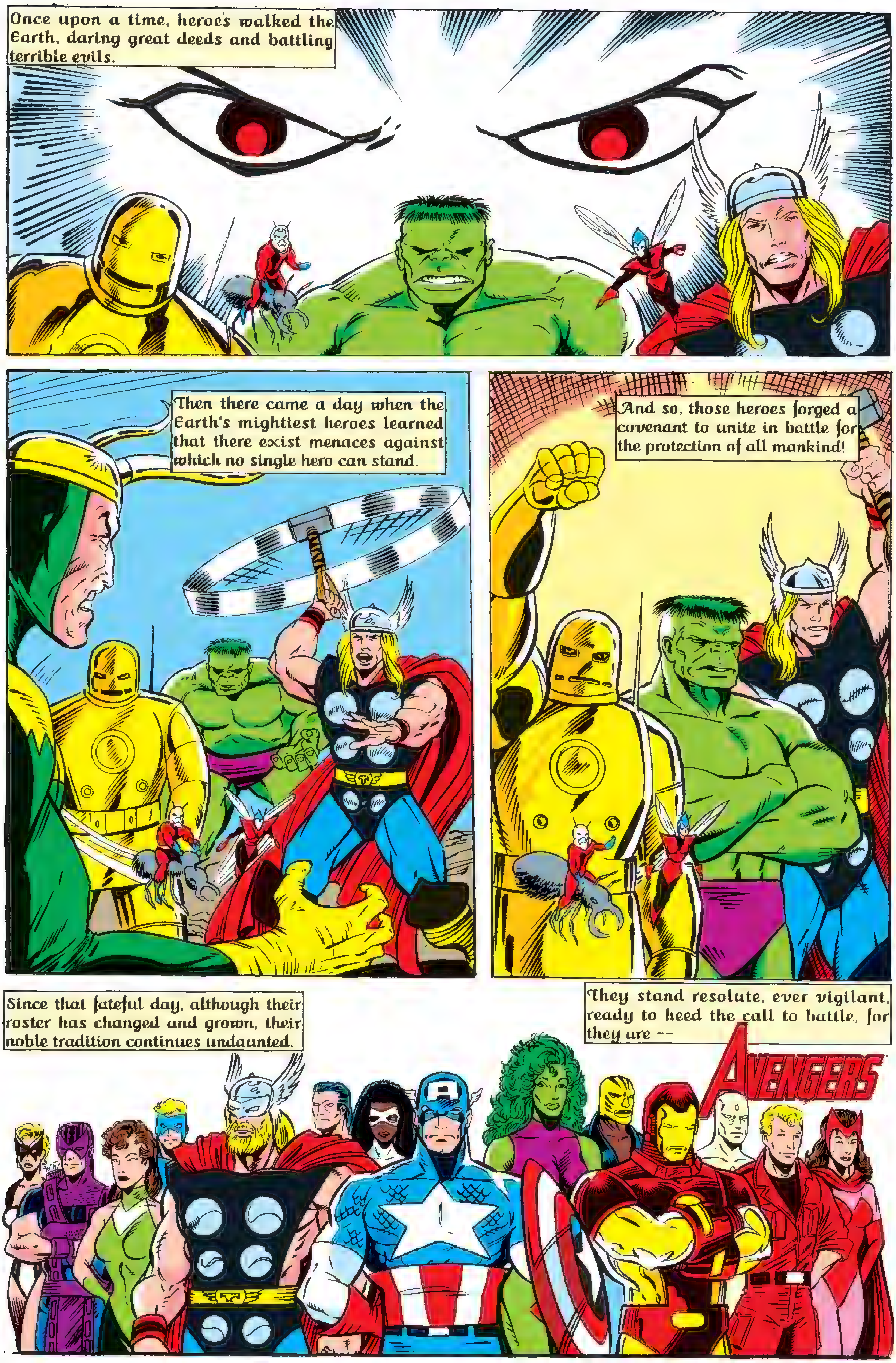

WHAT BETTER TIME TO ACT THAN *NOW,* WHILE HE'S DISTRACTED?
TOO LATE! HE'S NOTICED ME!


WHADDAYA SAY, CURLY-- REMEMBER *CRUSHER" CREEL?*
BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN--THE **ABSORBING MAN!**
HAVE YOUR PASSED EFFORTS FAILED TO CONVINCE YOU OF THE *MADNESS* OF THESE ACTIONS?
I WOULDN'T CALL THEM *MAD,* THOR! FAR FROM IT!
I CAN ABSORB THE POWER OF ANYONE I CAN GET MY MITTS ON! SO LOOK OUT GOLDILOCKS!

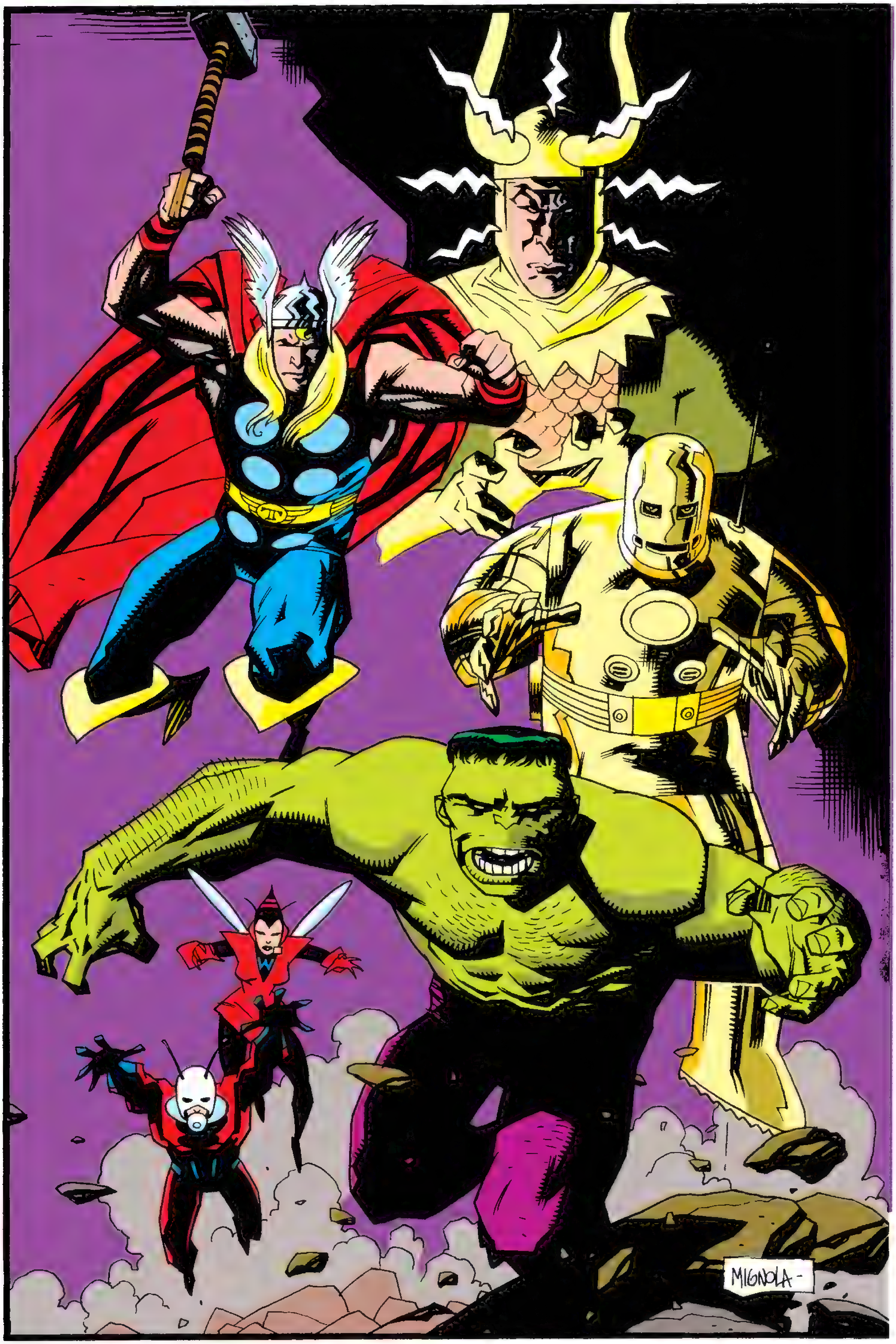

MEANWHILE...
HOPE I'M IN TIME--
WHEN I GOT JEFFERIE'S NOTE, SAYING HE'D COME HERE I RUSHED RIGHT OVER!
NO-- JUST WHAT I FEARED!
A FURIOUS BATTLE-- AND MY SON CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE!
HEAVEN HELP ME!
JEFFREY!!!
DAD...?
UNGH!
FACE IT, BLONDIE! I GOT A SCORE TO SETTLE... AND THERE'S NO WAY YOU'RE GONNA BEAT ME!
TRY THIS, FOR SIZE!
I'M SURE YOU REMEMBER IT!
I DON'T ONLY HAVE YOUR POWERS NOW, BUT SOME OF THE EXTRAS YOUR BROTHER, LOKI, GAVE ME WHEN HE FIRST CHANGED ME.*
KLANGK
NO ONE ELSE IS GONNA SAVE YOUR HIDE, EITHER! NOT THE AVENGERS--NOT NO ONE!
*BACK WHEN THESE LONG-TIME FOES FIRST MET IN JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #114.


WRONG!
I'M GOING TO STOP YOU--
--OR I'M GOING TO DIE TRYING!
YOU?!?
YOU'RE GONNA STOP ME?
HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!
WHAT KIND OF POWERS COULD YOU POSSIBLY HAVE?
WELL, WHATEVER YOU GOT INSIDE YOU IS MINE NOW!
ALL M--
M--


NO! NO!
I'VE CHANGED BEFORE--
BUT NEVER LIKE THIS!
BECOMING SOMETHING HORRIBLE LIKE A--
CANCER!
GOT TO GET AWAY--
GOT TO STOP IT--CHANGE INTO SOMETHING ELSE QUICK!
I'LL ABSORB--THE AIR YEAH--FRESH, CLEAN AIR!
I AIN'T THROUGH WITH YOU, THUNDER GOD--
--WE'LL FINISH THIS SOME OTHER DAY!
D-DAD... WHAT HAPPENED?
EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT, SON.
YOU... JUST HAD THE WIND KNOCKED OUT OF YOU-- PROBABLY A LITTLE SHOCKED, TOO, BUT YOU'LL BE OKAY.
THE ABSORBING MAN WILL TROUBLE US NO LONGER, MY FRIENDS.
AND, SOME TIME LATER...
YOU MEAN...? YOU MEAN...?
YES, JEFF, YOU'RE FINE-- PERFECT.
AND... YOU ARE, TOO, DAD?
IT LOOKS THAT WAY, SON!
THE DOCTORS GAVE ME THE NEWS THIS MORNING-- MY CANCER IS NOW IN REMISSION-- IT CAN BE TREATED!
I'VE BEEN GIVEN A NEW LEASE ON LIFE!
WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, IT LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE UP THERE LIKES US!
SOMEONE IS WATCHING OVER US!
FIN.


Once upon a time, heroes walked the Earth, daring great deeds and battling terrible evils.
Then there came a day when the Earth's mightiest heroes learned that there exist menaces against which no single hero can stand.
And so, those heroes forged a covenant to unite in battle for the protection of all mankind!
Since that fateful day, although their roster has changed and grown, their noble tradition continues undaunted.
They stand resolute, ever vigilant, ready to heed the call to battle, for they are --
AVENGERS

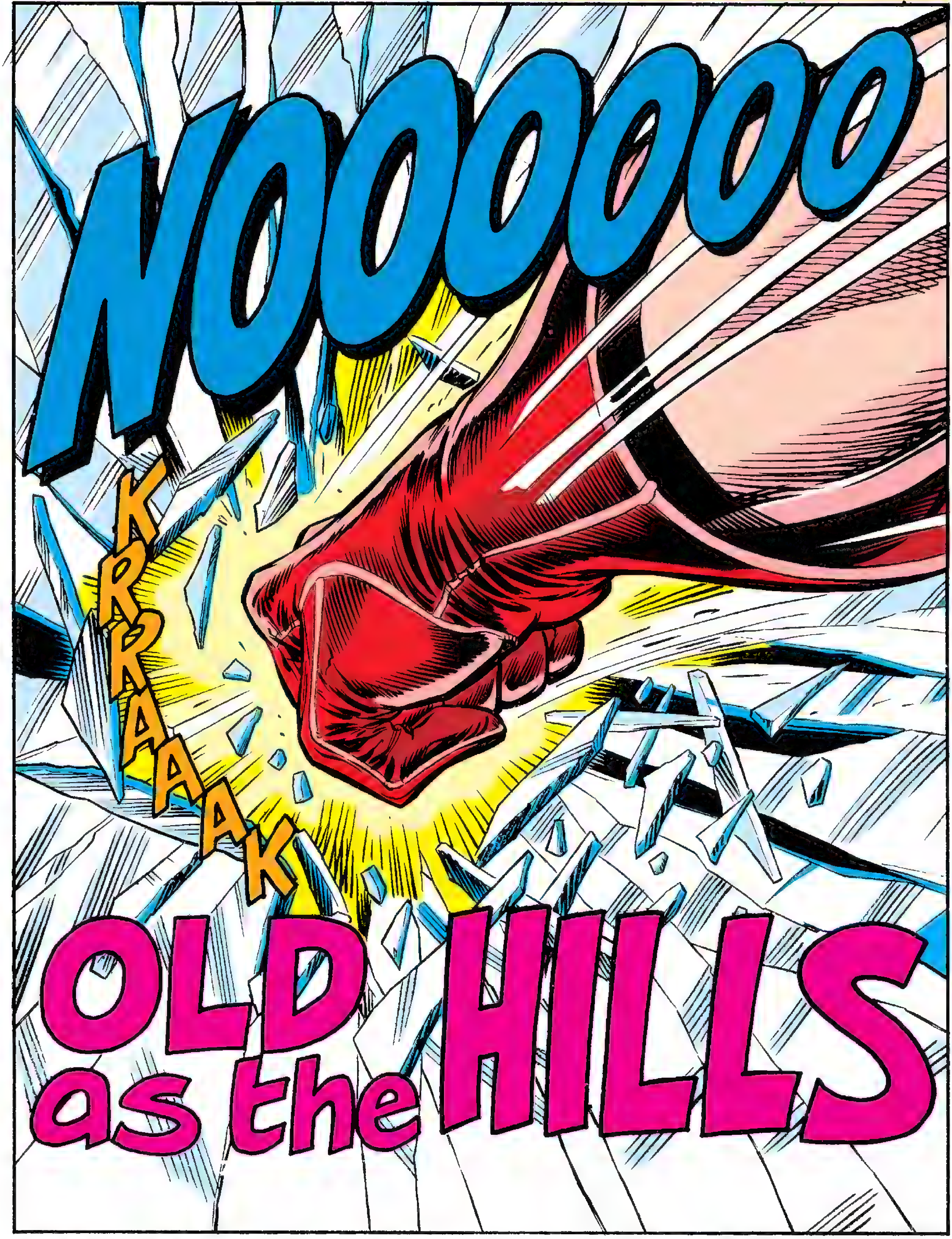
MARVEL MASTERWORK PIN-UP



MARVEL® COMICS
ANNUAL
PART 2
SUBTERRANEAN WARS™
64 PAGES
$2.00/ $2.45 CAN.
HULK
17◆1991
CC 02428
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE INCREDIBLE
HULK®
INSIDE: THE MOLE MAN!™ BETTY! TYRANNUS!™ BRUTUS!™ RICK JONES! THE PANTHEON!™ THE RETELLING OF THE HULK ORIGIN! 5 GREAT STORIES IN ONE GIANT-SIZED ISSUE!
WAGNER + McLEOD

CAUGHT IN THE HEART OF A GAMMA BOMB EXPLOSION, DR. **BRUCE BANNER** NOW FINDS HIMSELF TRANSFORMED INTO A POWERFUL, DARK, AND DISTORTED REFLECTION OF HIMSELF.

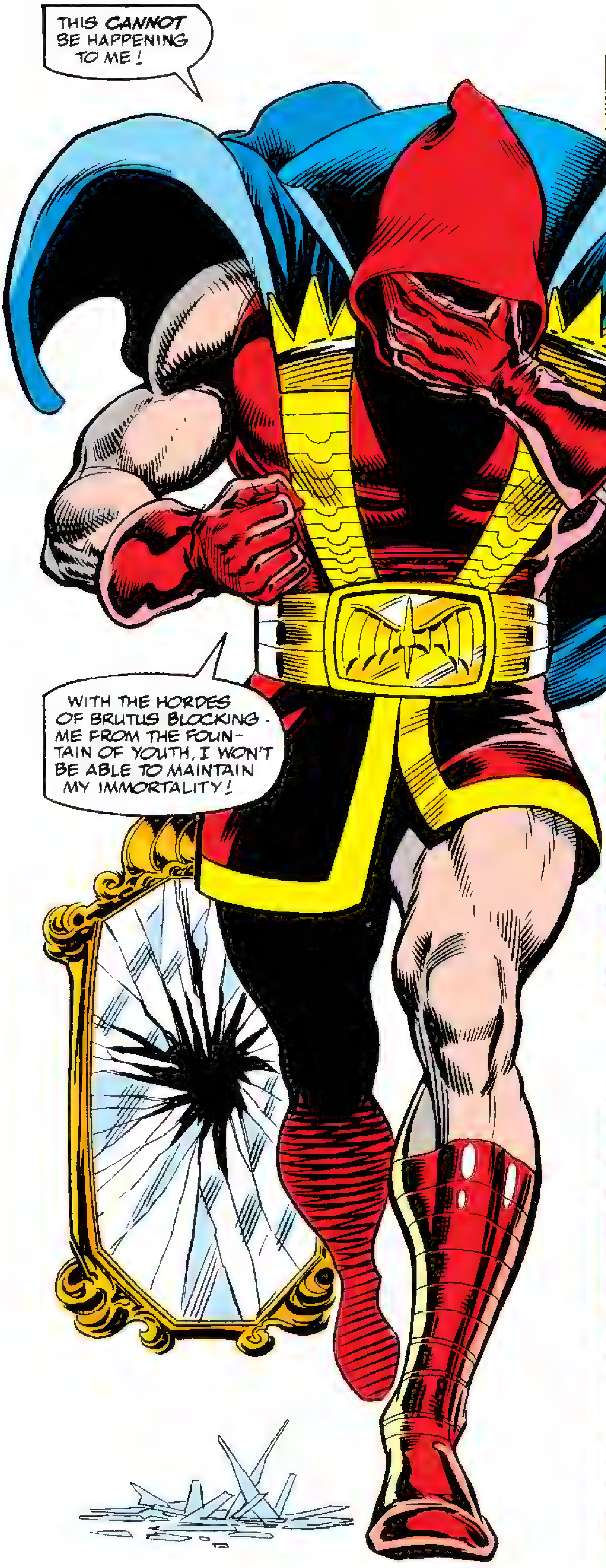
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . **THE INCREDIBLE HULK**

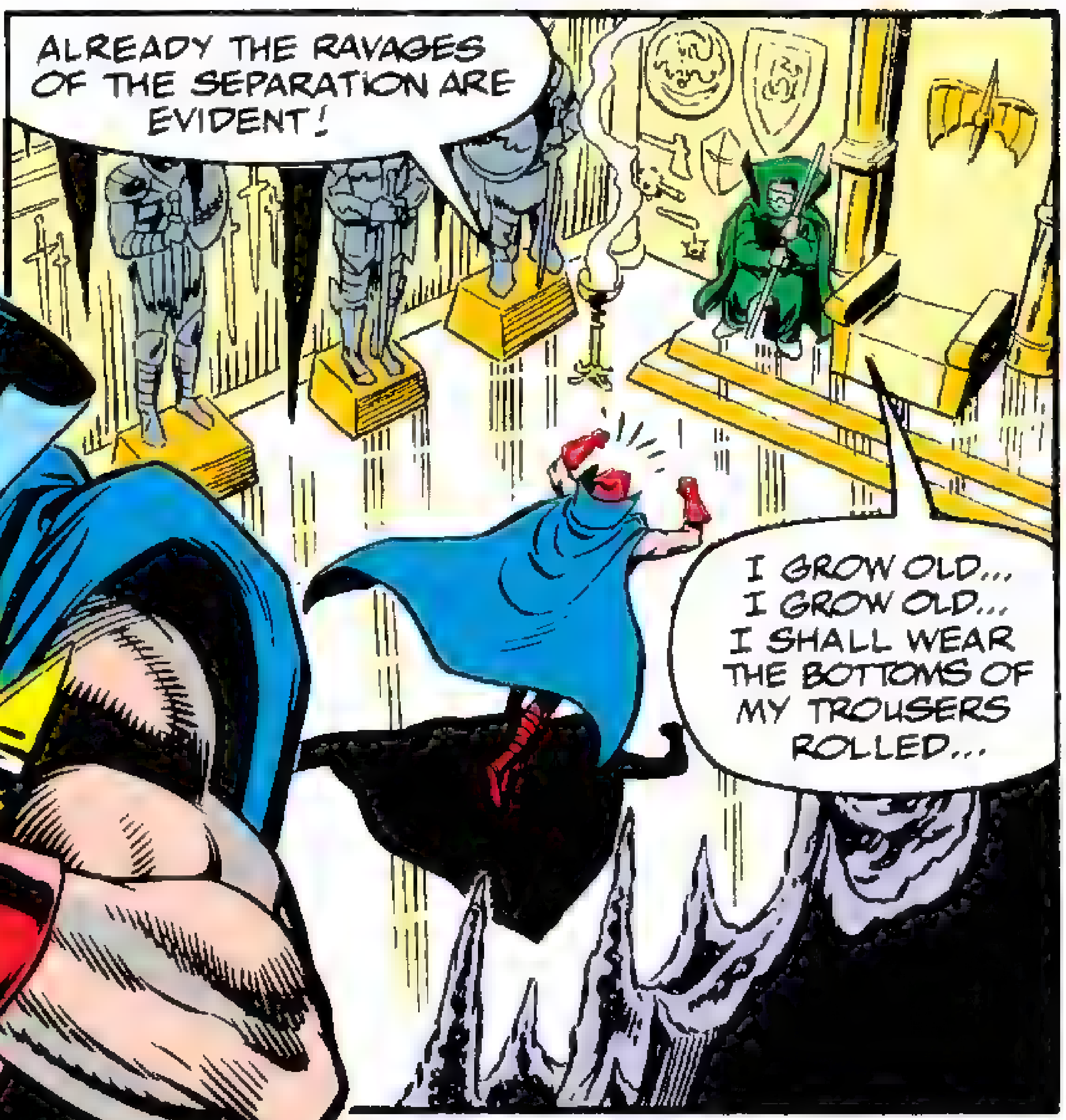


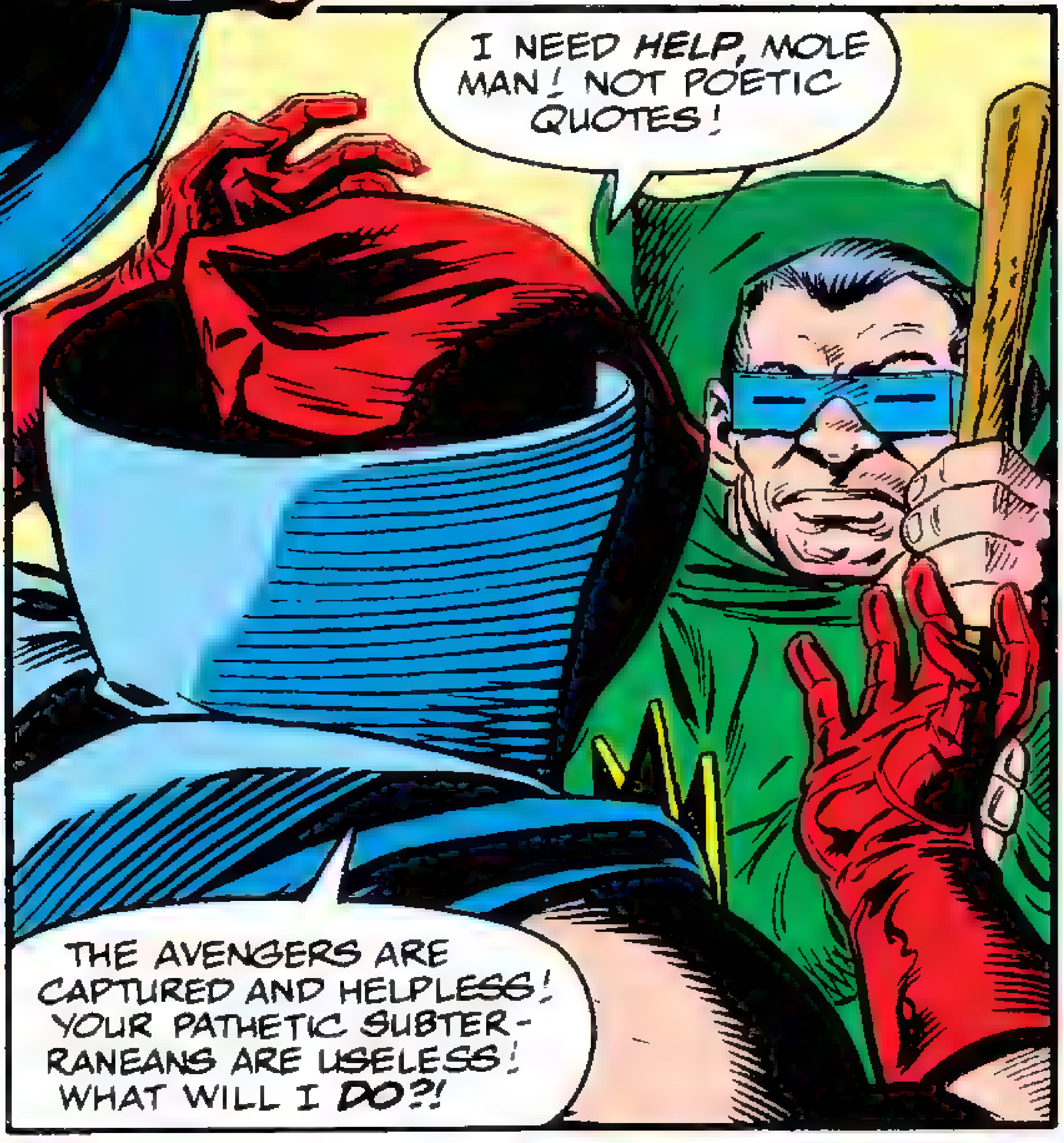
OLD as the HILLS

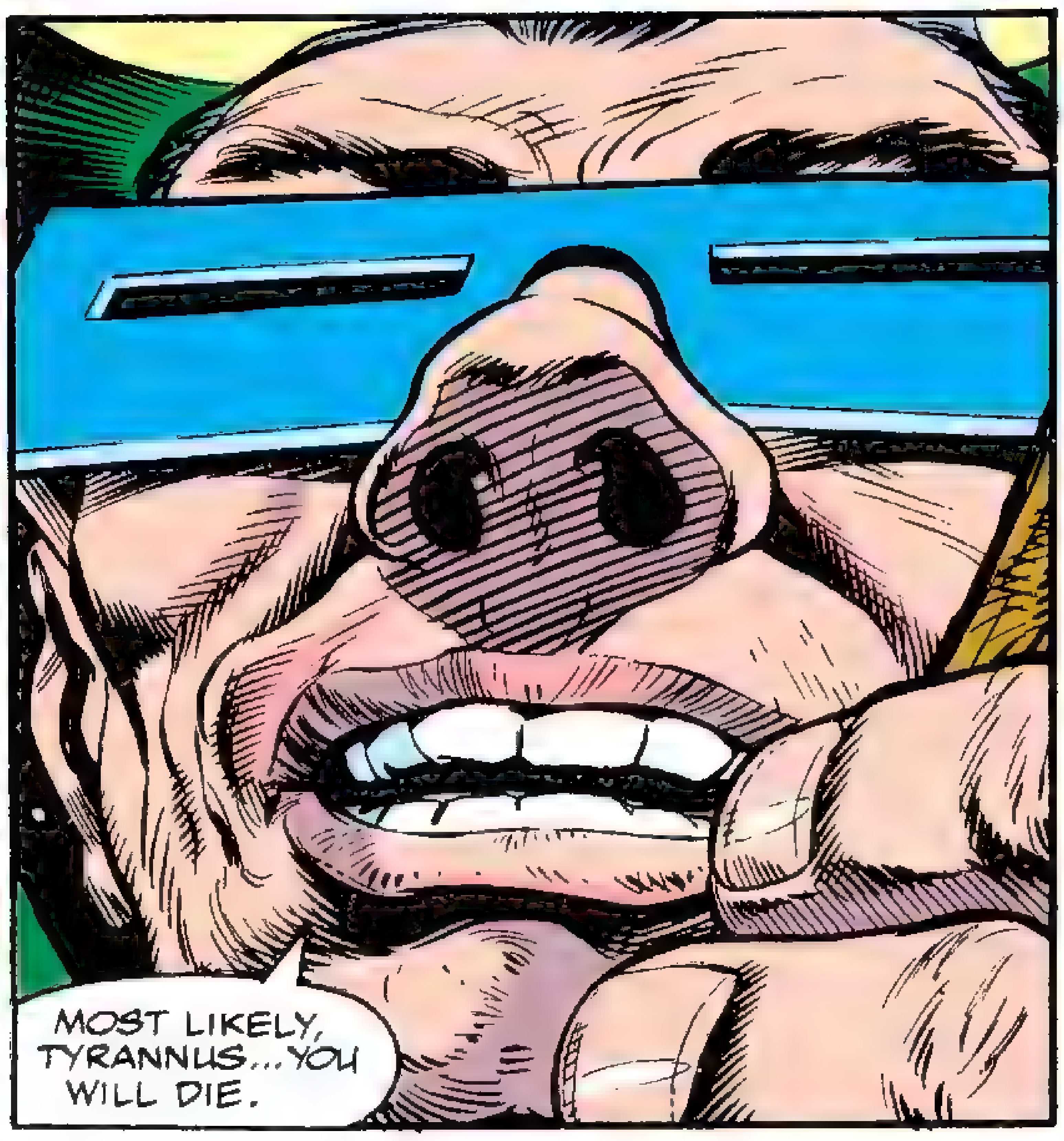
PETER DAVID WRITER
RON WAGNER PENCILER
MIKE WITHERBY INKER
AL MILGROM INKER PGS. 26-33
MIKE HEISLER LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER COLORIST
BOBBIE CHASE EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

BASED ON AN ORIGINAL CONCEPT BY PAUL RYAN.


THIS *CANNOT* BE HAPPENING TO ME!
WITH THE HORDES OF BRUTUS BLOCKING ME FROM THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH, I WON'T BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN MY IMMORTALITY!

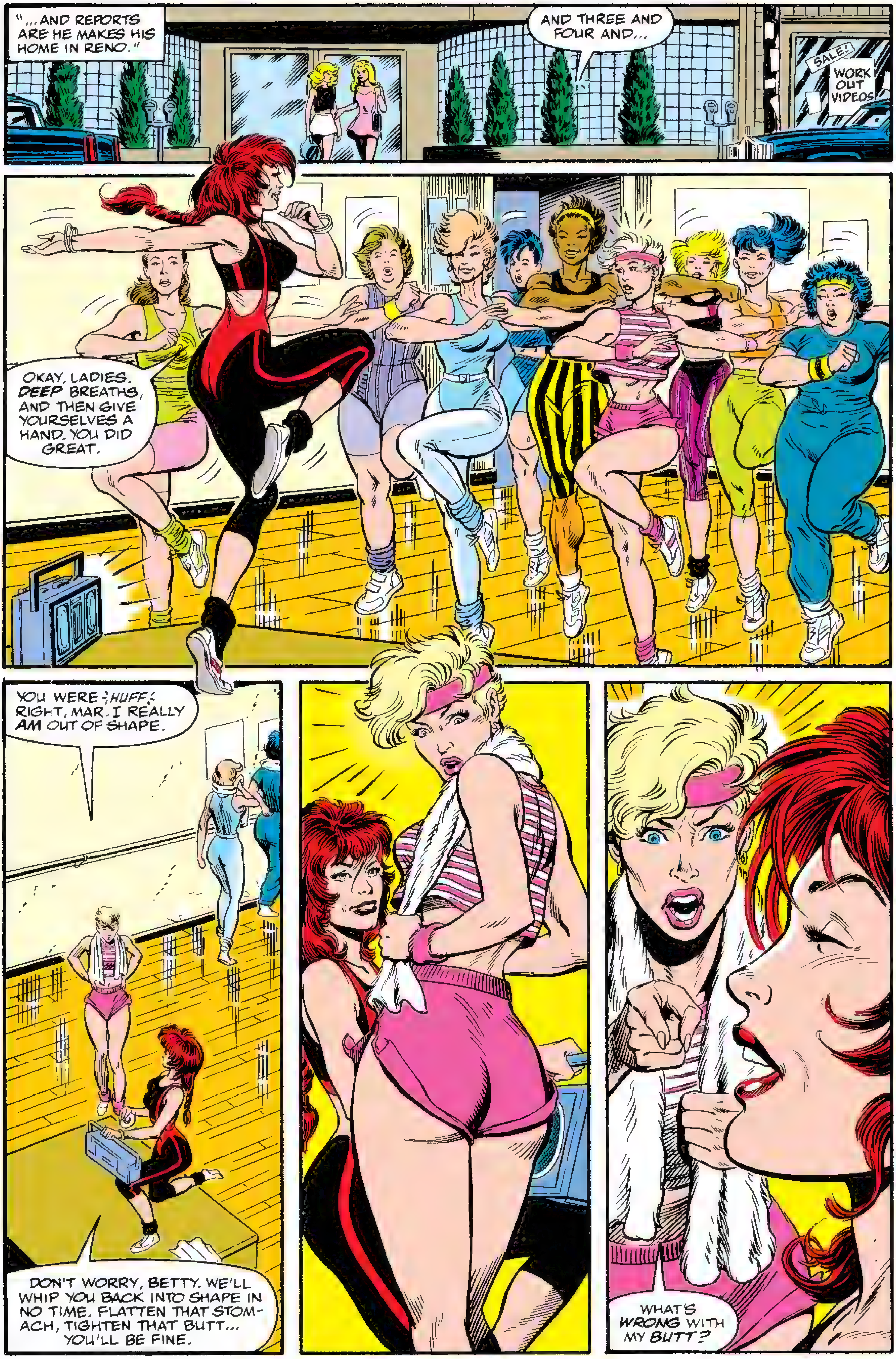

ALREADY THE RAVAGES OF THE SEPARATION ARE EVIDENT!
I GROW OLD... I GROW OLD... I SHALL WEAR THE BOTTOMS OF MY TROUSERS ROLLED...

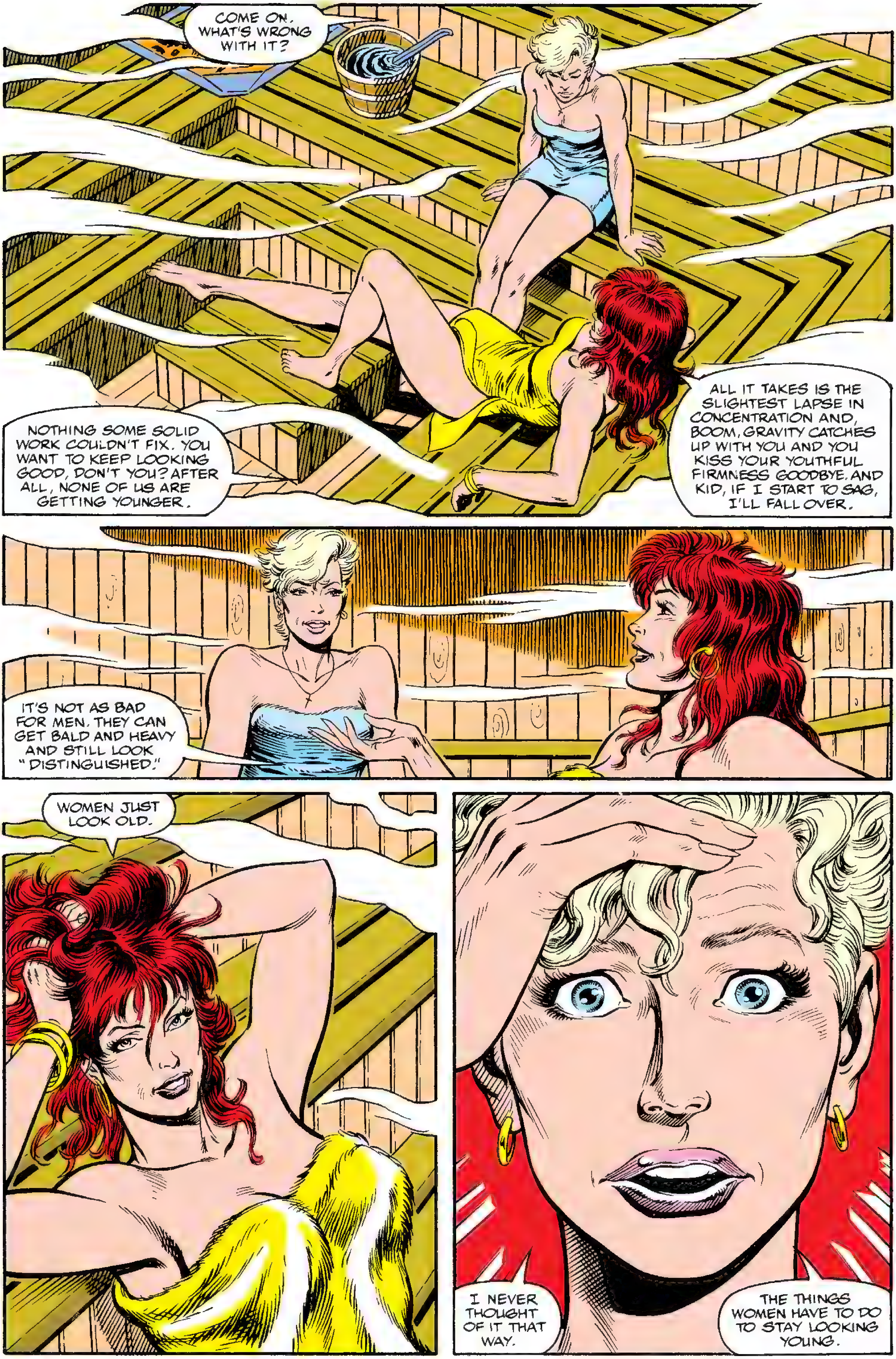

I NEED *HELP*, MOLE MAN! NOT POETIC QUOTES!
THE AVENGERS ARE CAPTURED AND HELPLESS! YOUR PATHETIC SUBTERRANEANS ARE USELESS! WHAT WILL I *DO*?!


MOST LIKELY, TYRANNUS... YOU WILL DIE.

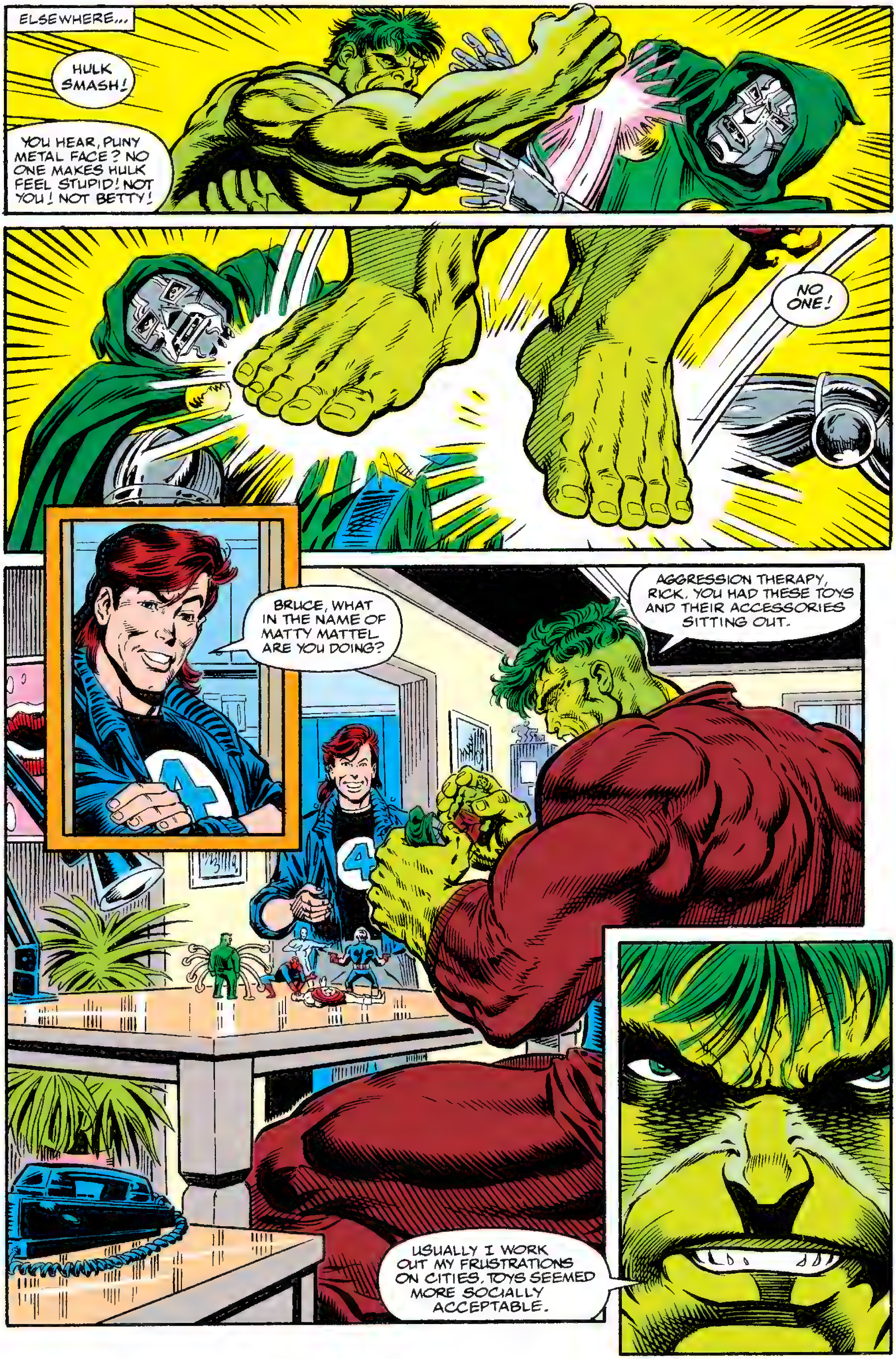
I DO NOT **ACCEPT** THAT! **TYRANNUS** IS NOT MEANT FOR DUST!
YOU'RE MY ALLY, MOLE MAN! YOU **MUST** HELP ME GET TO THE FOUNTAIN!
NOT I.
WUMMF
MY FORCES ARE HALVED. THE DESTRUCTION BY BRUTUS HAS BEEN DEVASTATING.
I'M STILL REGROUPING, AS ARE YOU. TO ATTACK BRUTUS NOW WOULD BE THE **HEIGHT** OF INSANITY.
BUT...BUT I CAN'T LET IT HAPPEN. I CANNOT.
I FEEL THE AGES CREEPING THROUGH ME. MY BODY DYING, CELL BY CELL. HOW DO YOU STAND IT?
I'M SHORT, UGLY, AND BLIND. MY EXISTENCE IS BEREFT OF PLEASURE. LIVING HOLDS FAR MORE TERROR FOR ME THAN DYING.
DEATH, LIKE MYSELF, IS ONLY A LITTLE THING.
OH, **DO** SHUT UP.

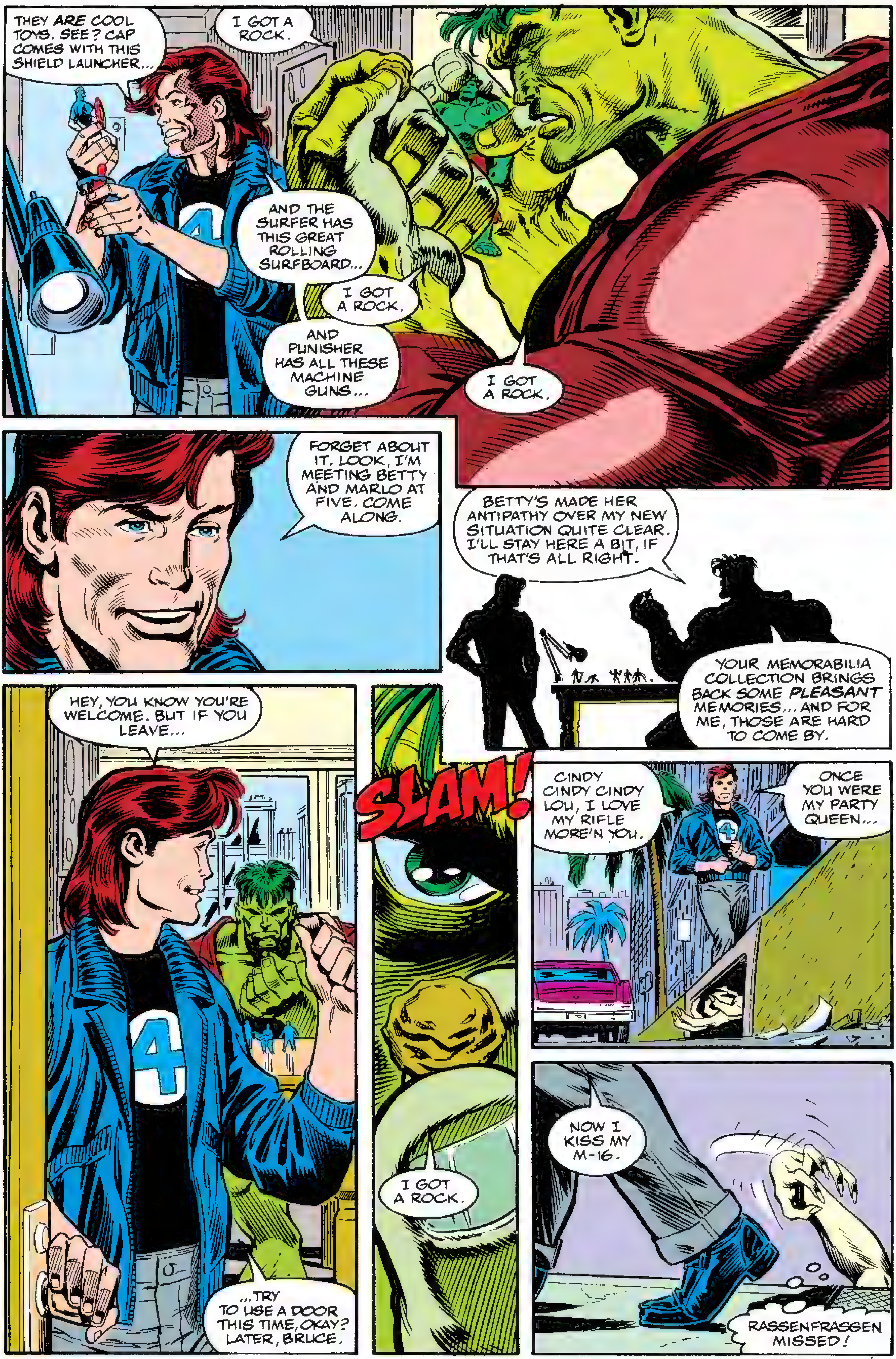
MY MIND IS *NUMB.* I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
WHEN YOU'VE HAD CRISES IN THE PAST, HOW HAVE YOU HANDLED THEM?
KIDNAPPED SOMEONE, AND FORCED THEM, OR SOMEONE CLOSE TO THEM, TO DO MY BIDDING.
A TRIED AND TRUE APPROACH. NOW WHO DO YOU THINK COULD HANDLE THE HORDES OF BRUTUS?
THE HULK.
I *THOUGHT* YOU MIGHT SAY THAT.
BUT WHERE IS HE? AND WHOM CAN I KIDNAP? THERE WAS A GIRL... *BETTY*... THE HULK SEEMED TO CARE FOR...
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT *HER*... BUT HIS ASSOCIATE, RICK JONES, HAS BEEN MUCH IN THE NEWS...

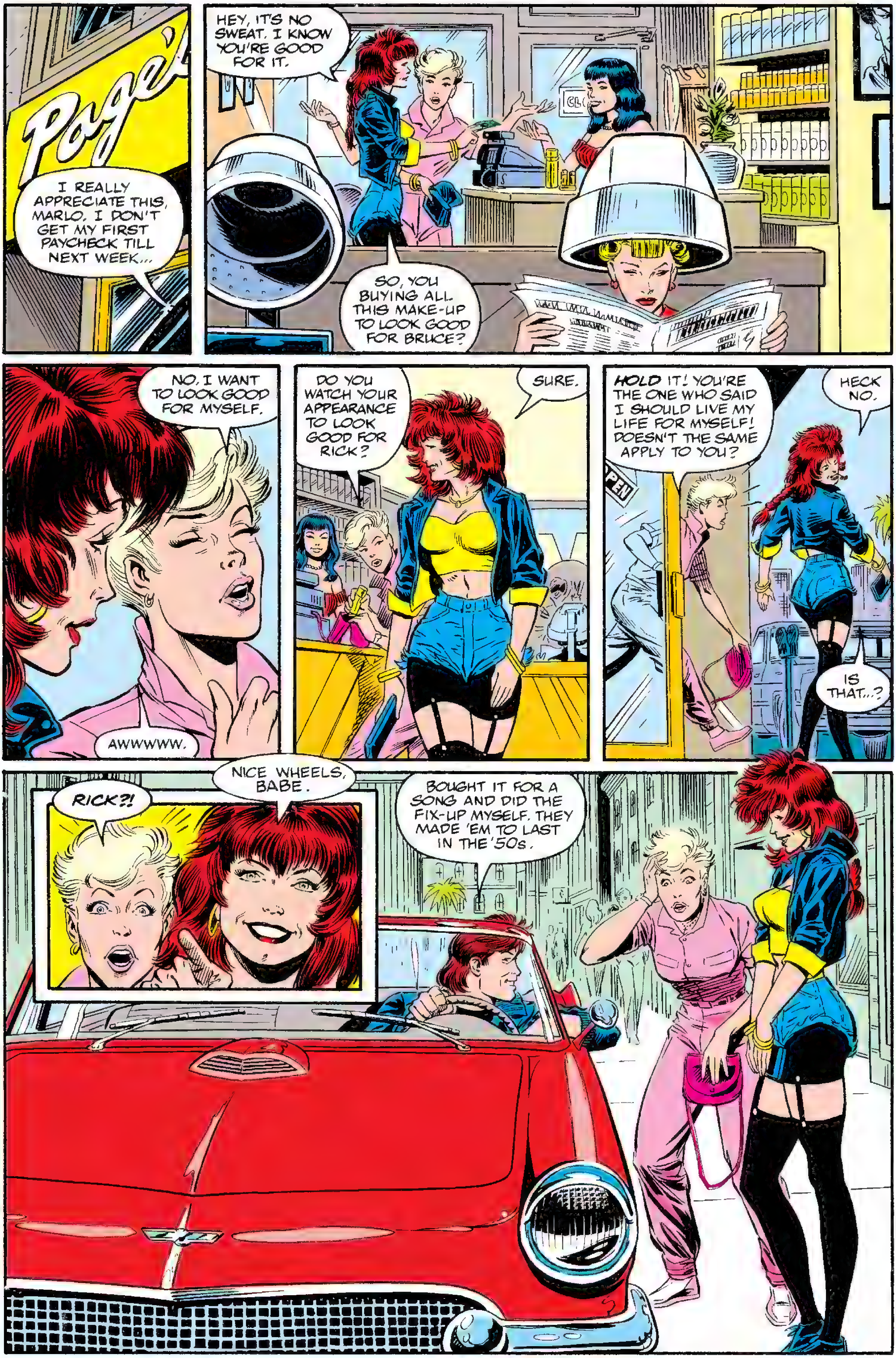

"...AND REPORTS ARE HE MAKES HIS HOME IN RENO."
AND THREE AND FOUR AND...
SALE!
WORK OUT VIDEOS
OKAY, LADIES. DEEP BREATHS, AND THEN GIVE YOURSELVES A HAND. YOU DID GREAT.
YOU WERE ;HUFF; RIGHT, MAR. I REALLY AM OUT OF SHAPE.
DON'T WORRY, BETTY. WE'LL WHIP YOU BACK INTO SHAPE IN NO TIME. FLATTEN THAT STOMACH, TIGHTEN THAT BUTT... YOU'LL BE FINE.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY BUTT?

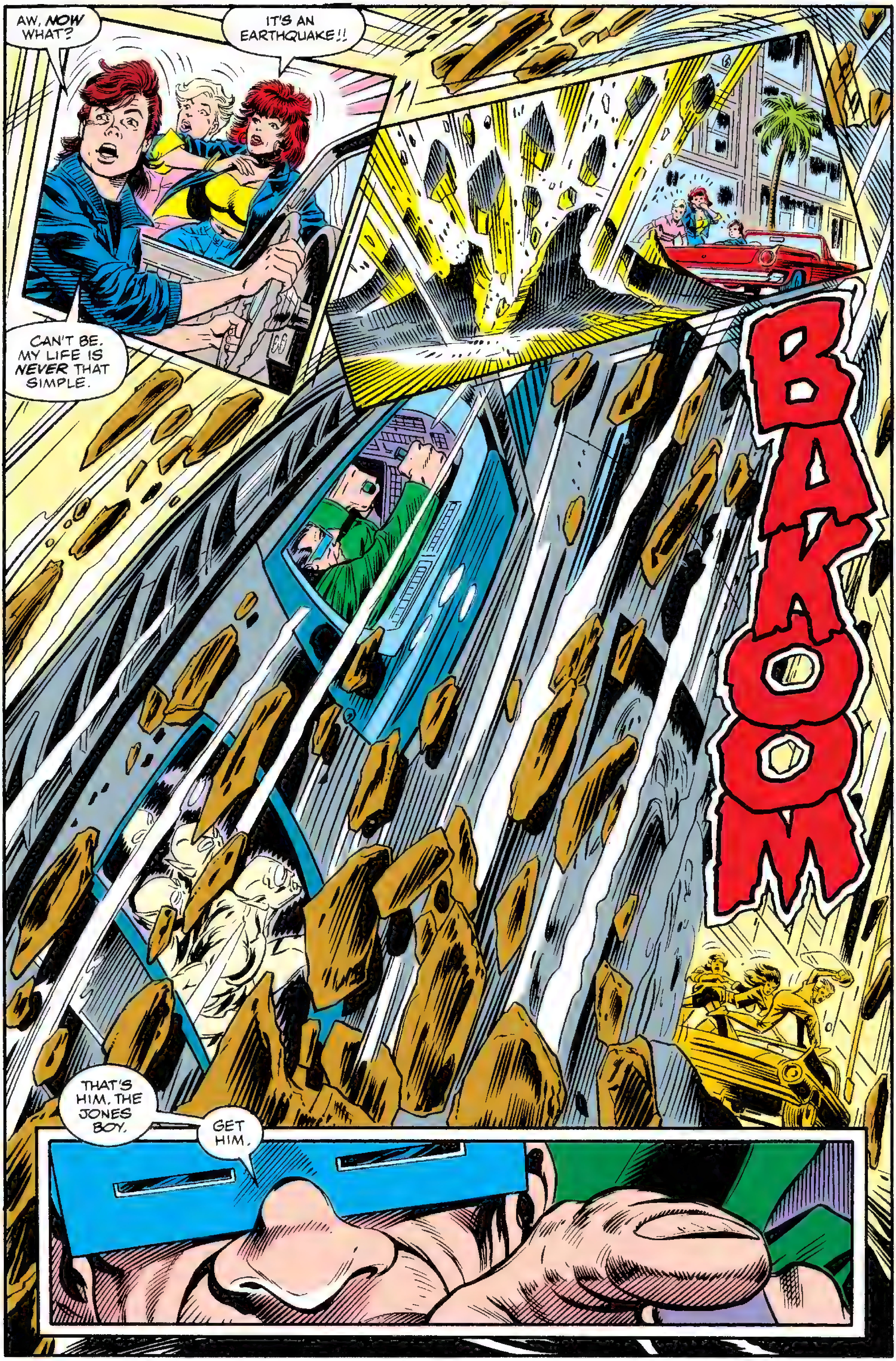

COME ON. WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT?
NOTHING SOME SOLID WORK COULDN'T FIX. YOU WANT TO KEEP LOOKING GOOD, DON'T YOU? AFTER ALL, NONE OF US ARE GETTING YOUNGER.
ALL IT TAKES IS THE SLIGHTEST LAPSE IN CONCENTRATION AND, BOOM, GRAVITY CATCHES UP WITH YOU AND YOU KISS YOUR YOUTHFUL FIRMNESS GOODBYE. AND KID, IF I START TO SAG, I'LL FALL OVER.
IT'S NOT AS BAD FOR MEN. THEY CAN GET BALD AND HEAVY AND STILL LOOK "DISTINGUISHED."
WOMEN JUST LOOK OLD.
I NEVER THOUGHT OF IT THAT WAY.
THE THINGS WOMEN HAVE TO DO TO STAY LOOKING YOUNG.

MOVE IT, SHORTY. RICK'S MEETING US AT THE BEAUTY PARLOR AT FIVE.
"SHORTY?"
AH! MISS MARLO. AND HOW IS THE JOB HERE AT OUR LITTLE ESTABLISHMENT WORKING OUT?
NO PUN INTENDED.
PUN?
THE "WORKING OUT" BIT. DEVILISHLY CLEVER, I THOUGHT.
OH. YES, UH...IT'S "WORKING OUT" FINE. BETTY, THIS IS MR. SWEENEY...
OWNER AND OPERATOR OF RENO SWEENEY'S EXERCISE EMPORIUM. AND YOU, SWEET CHILD--?
BETTY BANNER. I'M MARLO'S ROOMMATE.
THE TWO OF YOU IN ONE ROOM. WHAT A STUNNING PROSPECT.
MAY I ASK, MR. SWEENEY, HOW SUCH A POLISHED GENTLEMAN WOUND UP RUNNING A GYM CLUB IN RENO?
OH, WELL, I USED TO BE AN INTERGALACTIC BOUNTY HUNTER, BUT I RETIRED. FORTUNATELY I SAVED UP MY COMMISSIONS AND OPENED THIS ESTABLISHMENT.
YOU BRITISH ARE SUCH KIDDERS.
YES, AREN'T WE, THOUGH. WELL, MUST RUN.
BUT THIS HAS BEEN SMASHING. TA.
TA!
"INTERGALACTIC BOUNTY HUNTER?"
BEAM ME UP, SCOTTY.


ELSEWHERE...
HULK SMASH!
YOU HEAR, PUNY METAL FACE? NO ONE MAKES HULK FEEL STUPID! NOT YOU! NOT BETTY!
NO ONE!
BRUCE, WHAT IN THE NAME OF MATTY MATTEL ARE YOU DOING?
AGGRESSION THERAPY, RICK. YOU HAD THESE TOYS AND THEIR ACCESSORIES SITTING OUT.
USUALLY I WORK OUT MY FRUSTRATIONS ON CITIES. TOYS SEEMED MORE SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE.

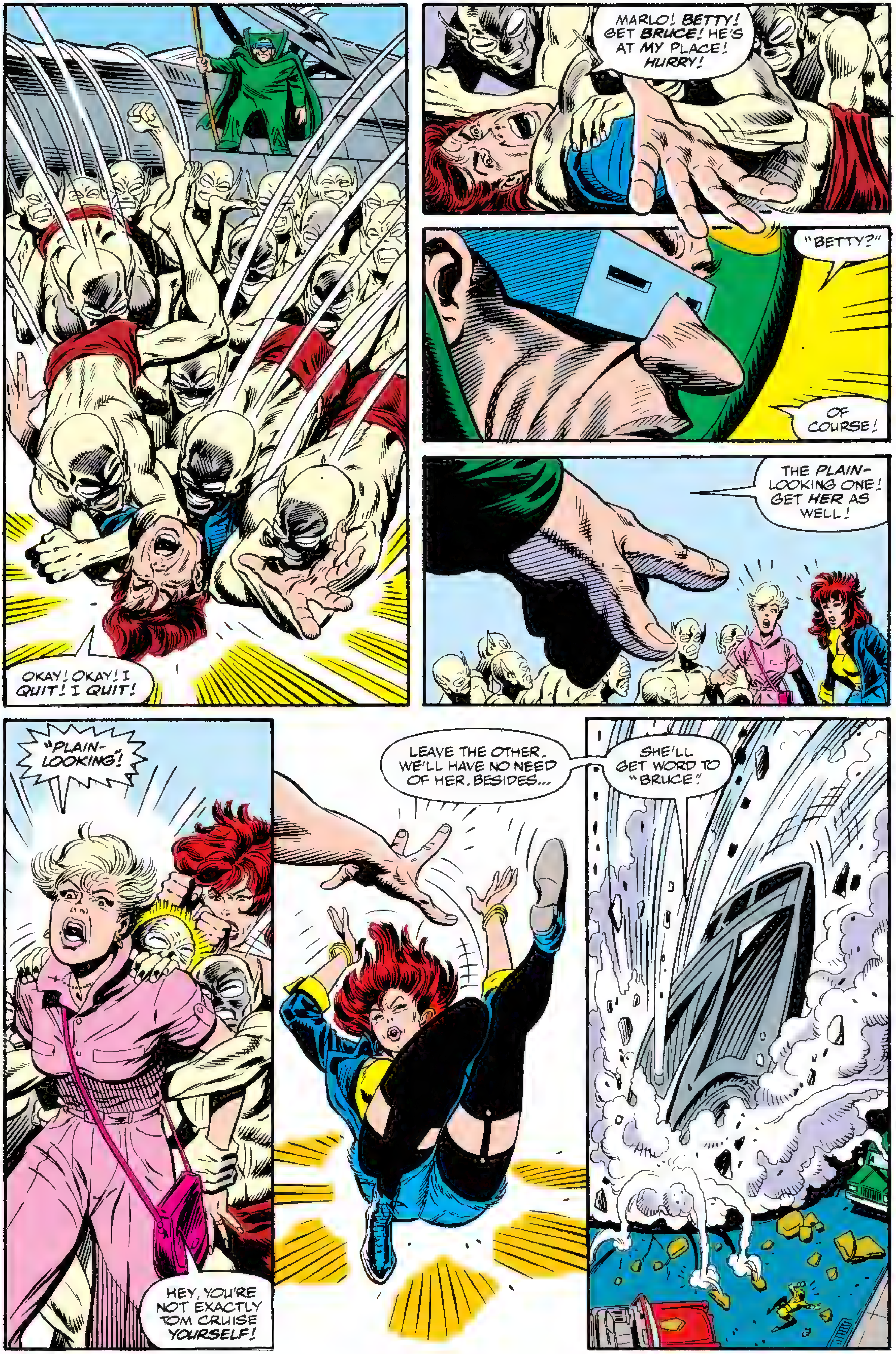

THEY *ARE* COOL TOYS. SEE? CAP COMES WITH THIS SHIELD LAUNCHER...
I GOT A ROCK.
AND THE SURFER HAS THIS GREAT ROLLING SURFBOARD...
I GOT A ROCK.
AND PUNISHER HAS ALL THESE MACHINE GUNS...
I GOT A ROCK.
FORGET ABOUT IT. LOOK, I'M MEETING BETTY AND MARLO AT FIVE. COME ALONG.
BETTY'S MADE HER ANTIPATHY OVER MY NEW SITUATION QUITE CLEAR. I'LL STAY HERE A BIT, IF THAT'S ALL RIGHT.
YOUR MEMORABILIA COLLECTION BRINGS BACK SOME *PLEASANT* MEMORIES... AND FOR ME, THOSE ARE HARD TO COME BY.
HEY, YOU KNOW YOU'RE WELCOME. BUT IF YOU LEAVE...
...TRY TO USE A DOOR THIS TIME, OKAY? LATER, BRUCE.
SLAM!
I GOT A ROCK.
CINDY CINDY CINDY LOU, I LOVE MY RIFLE MORE'N YOU.
ONCE YOU WERE MY PARTY QUEEN...
NOW I KISS MY M-16.
RASSENFRASSEN MISSED!


Page's
I REALLY APPRECIATE THIS, MARLO. I DON'T GET MY FIRST PAYCHECK TILL NEXT WEEK...
HEY, IT'S NO SWEAT. I KNOW YOU'RE GOOD FOR IT.
SO, YOU BUYING ALL THIS MAKE-UP TO LOOK GOOD FOR BRUCE?
NO. I WANT TO LOOK GOOD FOR MYSELF.
AWWWWW.
DO YOU WATCH YOUR APPEARANCE TO LOOK GOOD FOR RICK?
SURE.
HOLD IT! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID I SHOULD LIVE MY LIFE FOR MYSELF! DOESN'T THE SAME APPLY TO YOU?
HECK NO.
IS THAT...?
RICK?!
NICE WHEELS, BABE.
BOUGHT IT FOR A SONG AND DID THE FIX-UP MYSELF. THEY MADE 'EM TO LAST IN THE '50s.


AW, NOW WHAT?
IT'S AN EARTHQUAKE!!
CAN'T BE. MY LIFE IS NEVER THAT SIMPLE.
BAKOOM
THAT'S HIM. THE JONES BOY.
GET HIM.

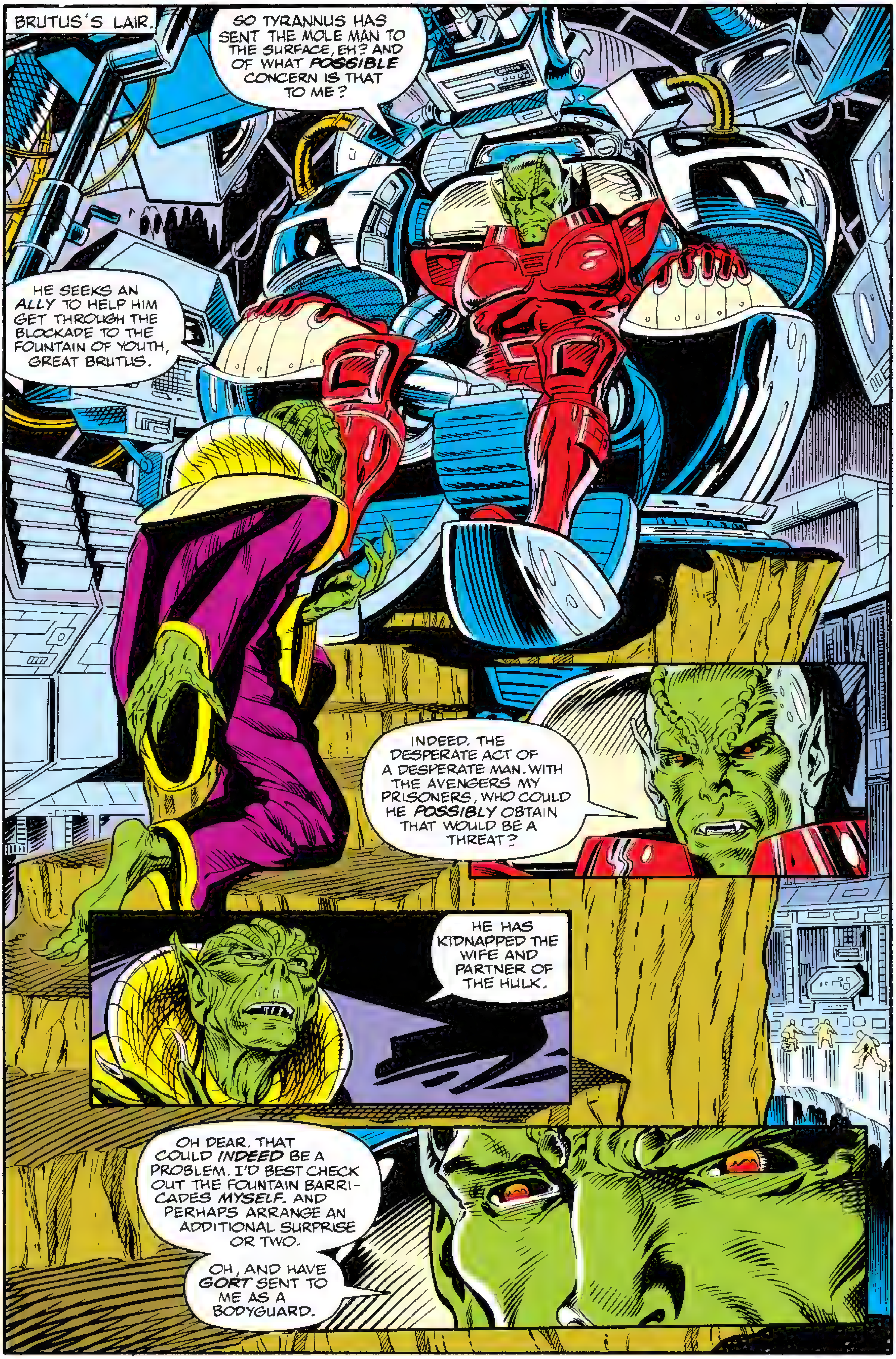
IN THE CAR! *HURRY!*
WHO *IS* THAT?!
THE MOLE MAN. HE'S LIKE DANNY DEVITO, BUT WITH A REALLY BAD ATTITUDE.
YOU REALIZE THIS IS GOING TO BLOW OUR DINNER RESERVATIONS.
HOW CAN YOU WORRY ABOUT DINNER RESERVATIONS?
ONE WAY
I'M *HUNGRY*, OKAY?! I SKIPPED BREAKFAST! GIMME A BREAK!
RICK! THIS IS A ONE-WAY STREET!
BUT I'M ONLY GOING--
--ONE WAY. GET SOME NEW MATERIAL, RICK.

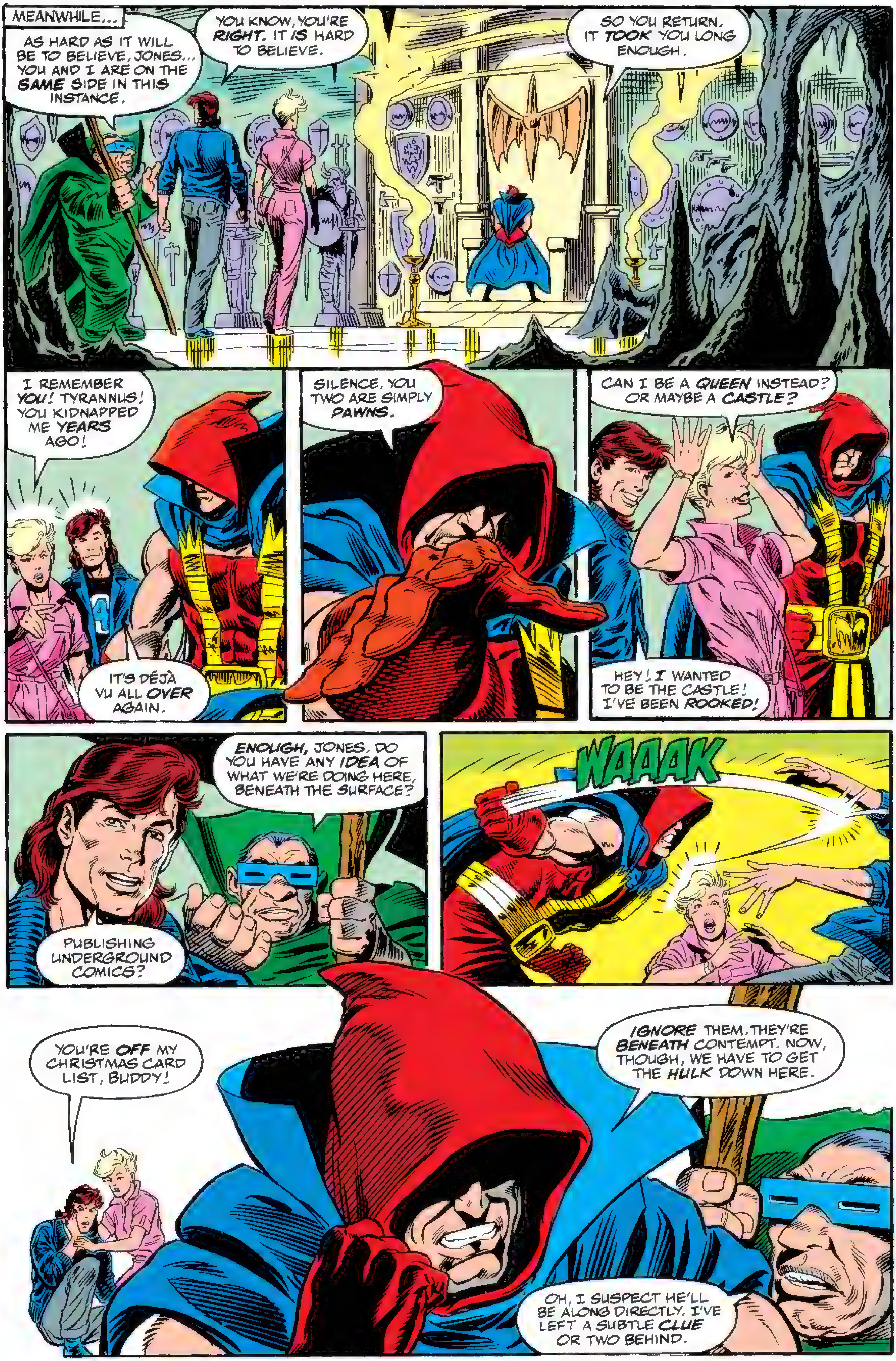
BCHOOM
SKREEE
RICK!!
MARLO, HOLD ON TO HIM! I'LL GRAB THE WHEEL!
RICK! KEEP FIGHTING! DON'T QUIT!
QUIT?! NO CHANCE!
WOULD CAP QUIT? NO!
DID MAR-VELL QUIT? NO!
OR THE HULK QUIT? NO!
C'MON, YOU PILLSBURY DOUGHBOYS! WHO WANTS MORE?!


OKAY! OKAY! I QUIT! I QUIT!
MARLO! BETTY! GET BRUCE! HE'S AT MY PLACE! HURRY!
"BETTY?"
OF COURSE!
THE PLAIN-LOOKING ONE! GET HER AS WELL!
"PLAIN-LOOKING"!
HEY, YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY TOM CRUISE YOURSELF!
LEAVE THE OTHER. WE'LL HAVE NO NEED OF HER. BESIDES...
SHE'LL GET WORD TO "BRUCE".

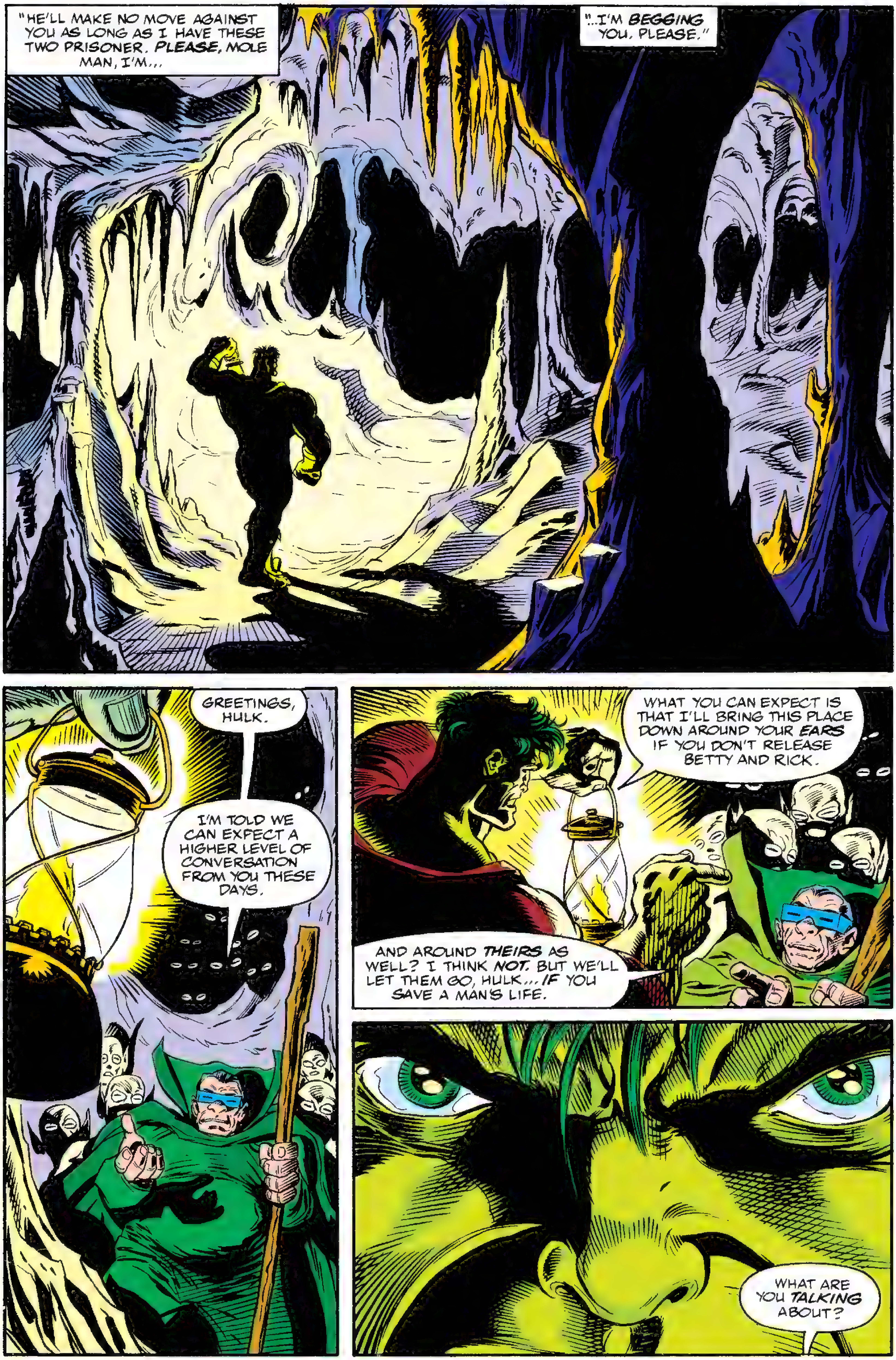
I CAN'T SAY I APPRECIATE BETTY'S CURRENT ATTITUDE.
I LOVE HER, NEVER SO MUCH AS SAID A HARSH WORD TO HER, AND SHE ACTS LIKE SHE'D SOONER PLAY PATTY-CAKE WITH EDWARD SCISSORHANDS THAN BE NEAR ME.
I'M HER HUSBAND, FEELING BETTER THAN I EVER HAVE.
WHY CAN'T SHE SEE THAT?
MAKES YOU START TO WONDER WHO YOUR FRIENDS ARE...
...AND WHO YOUR ENEMIES ARE.
HARKNE
NO PARKING
BRUCE!
HARKNE
NO PARKING
BRUCE, WAIT! BETTY AND RICK NEED YOU! THEY'RE--
BRUCE!!

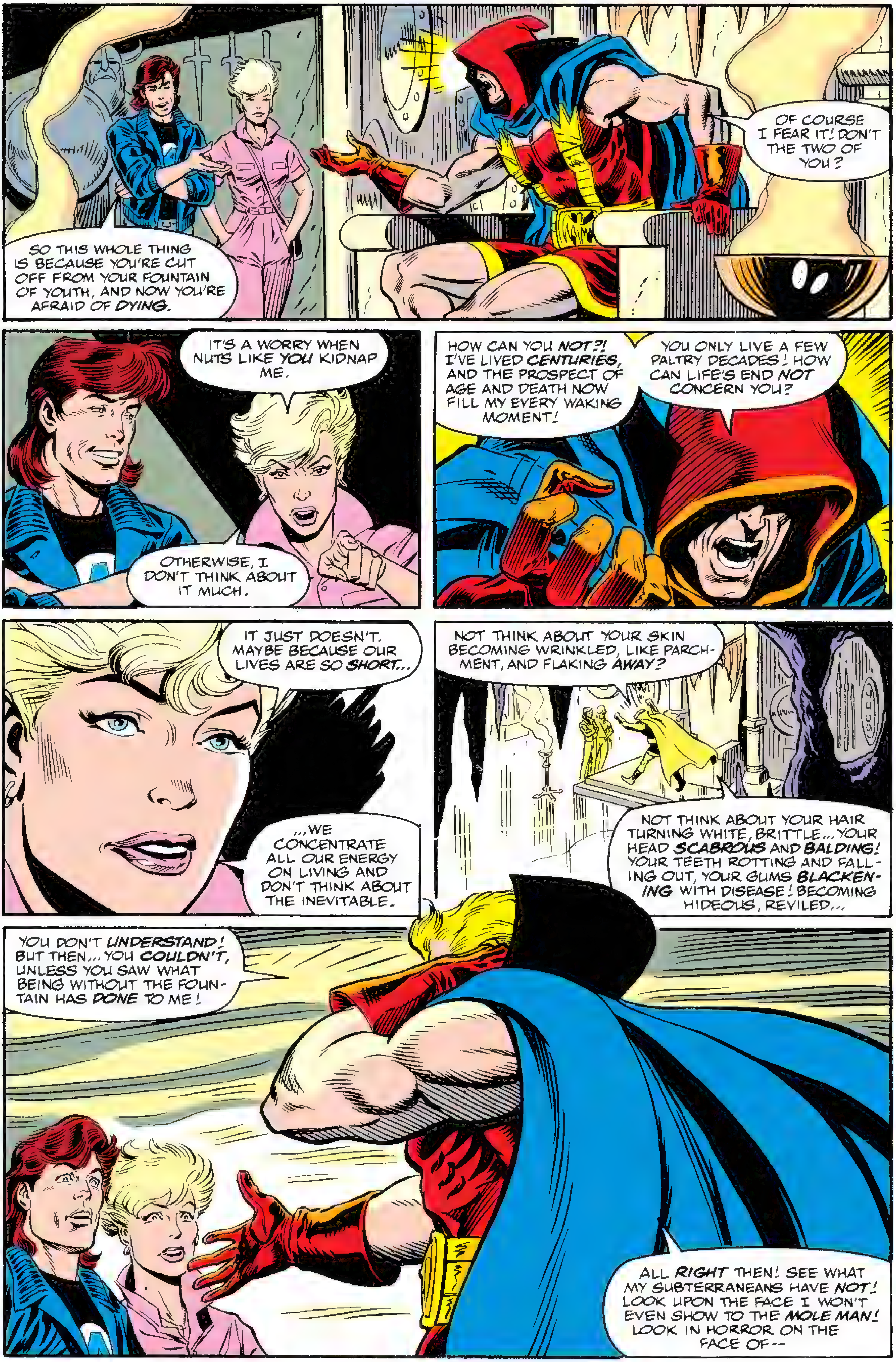
OHHHH, JEEZ. WHAT AM I GONNA DO *NOW?*
I'VE GOTTA GET IN *TOUCH* WITH SOMEBODY. THE ARMY? THE FEDS?
THOOM
ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE! *RUN!* THE MOLE MAN'S *ATTACKING* AG--
OH! IT'S *YOU!* I...I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T *HEAR* ME.
OF *COURSE* I HEARD YOU. BUT I DON'T EXACTLY COME EQUIPPED WITH AIRBRAKES.
WHAT HAPPENED? AND WHAT'S THAT ABOUT THE *MOLE MAN?*

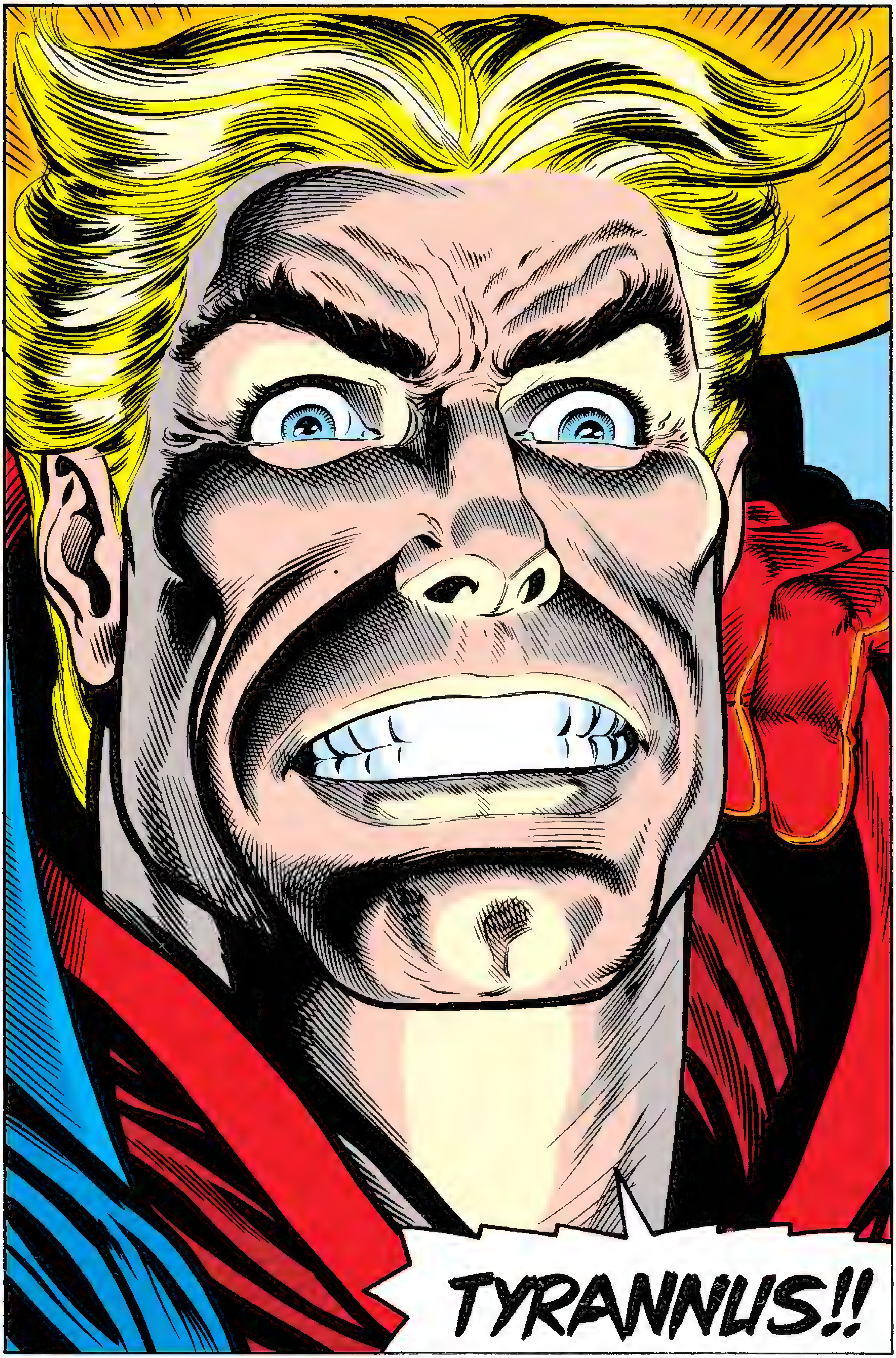

BRUTUS'S LAIR.
SO TYRANNUS HAS SENT THE MOLE MAN TO THE SURFACE, EH? AND OF WHAT *POSSIBLE* CONCERN IS THAT TO ME?
HE SEEKS AN *ALLY* TO HELP HIM GET THROUGH THE BLOCKADE TO THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH, GREAT BRUTUS.
INDEED. THE DESPERATE ACT OF A DESPERATE MAN. WITH THE AVENGERS MY PRISONERS, WHO COULD HE *POSSIBLY* OBTAIN THAT WOULD BE A THREAT?
HE HAS KIDNAPPED THE WIFE AND PARTNER OF THE HULK.
OH DEAR. THAT COULD *INDEED* BE A PROBLEM. I'D BEST CHECK OUT THE FOUNTAIN BARRICADES *MYSELF*. AND PERHAPS ARRANGE AN ADDITIONAL SURPRISE OR TWO.
OH, AND HAVE *GORT* SENT TO ME AS A BODYGUARD.

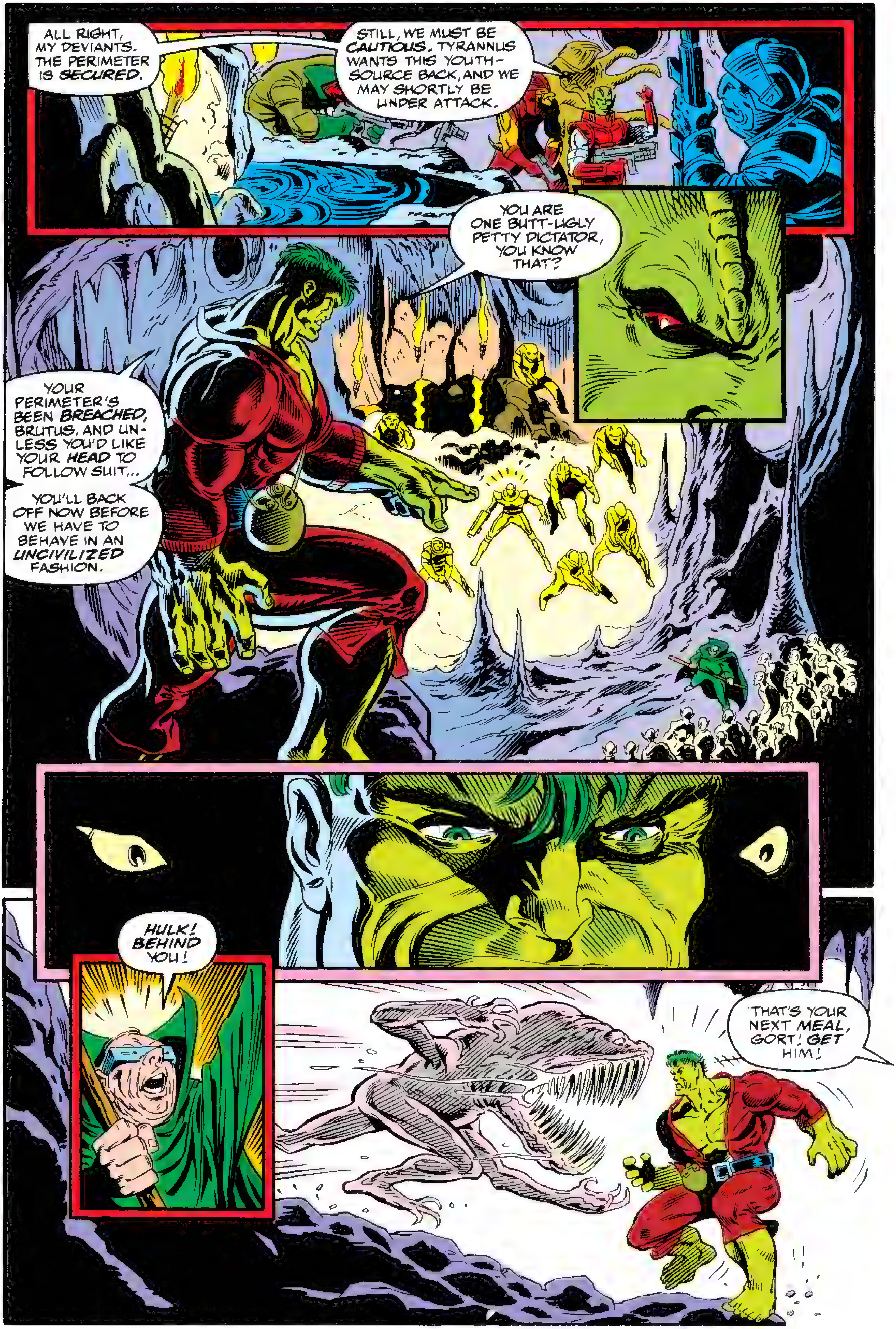

MEANWHILE...
AS HARD AS IT WILL BE TO BELIEVE, JONES... YOU AND I ARE ON THE SAME SIDE IN THIS INSTANCE.
YOU KNOW, YOU'RE RIGHT. IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE.
SO YOU RETURN. IT TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH.
I REMEMBER YOU! TYRANNUS! YOU KIDNAPPED ME YEARS AGO!
IT'S DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN.
SILENCE. YOU TWO ARE SIMPLY PAWNS.
CAN I BE A QUEEN INSTEAD? OR MAYBE A CASTLE?
HEY! I WANTED TO BE THE CASTLE! I'VE BEEN ROOKED!
ENOUGH, JONES. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF WHAT WE'RE DOING HERE, BENEATH THE SURFACE?
PUBLISHING UNDERGROUND COMICS?
WAAAK
YOU'RE OFF MY CHRISTMAS CARD LIST, BUDDY!
IGNORE THEM. THEY'RE BENEATH CONTEMPT. NOW, THOUGH, WE HAVE TO GET THE HULK DOWN HERE.
OH, I SUSPECT HE'LL BE ALONG DIRECTLY. I'VE LEFT A SUBTLE CLUE OR TWO BEHIND.

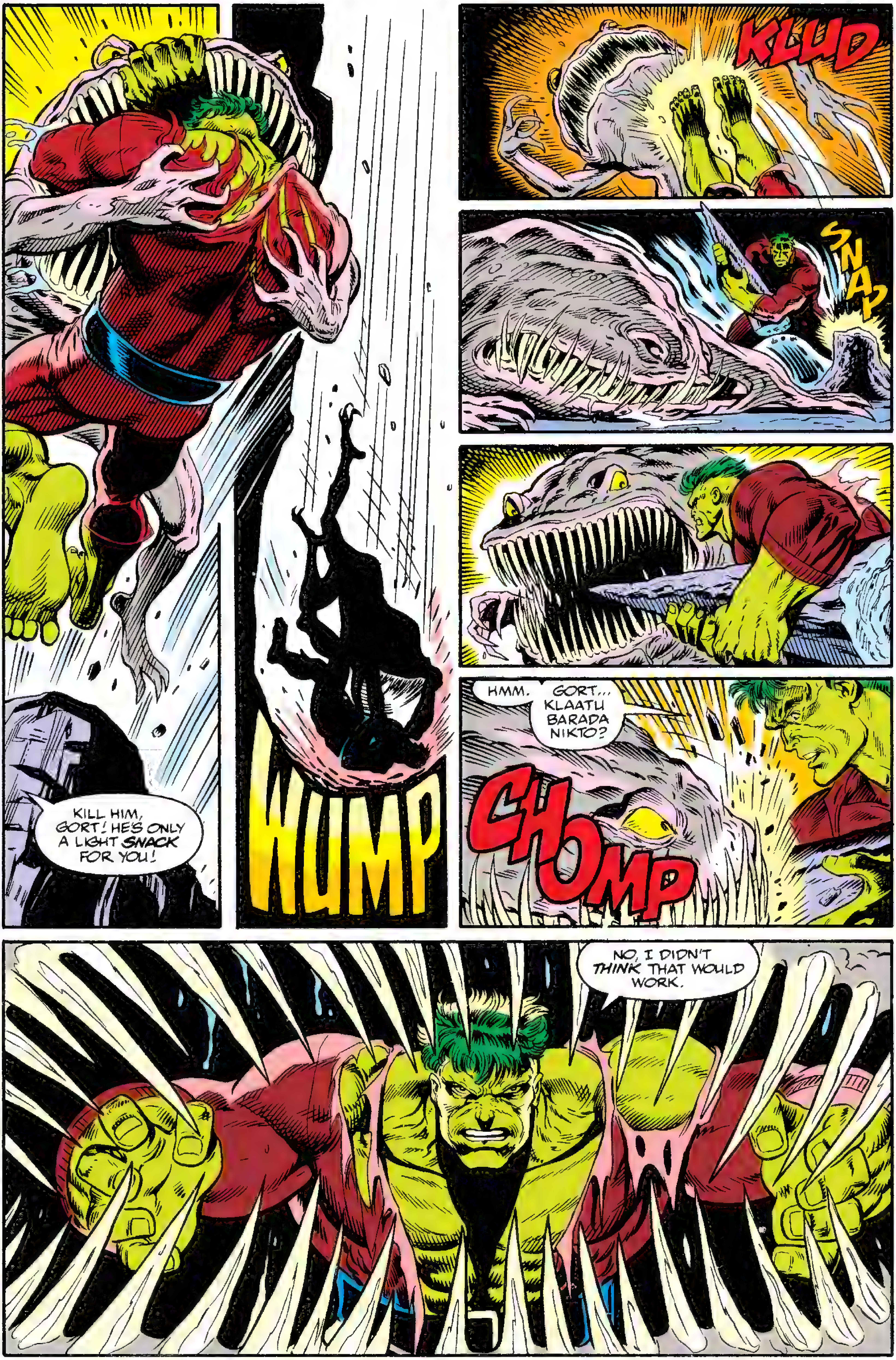
HMMM. WELL, THEY *APPEAR* TO HAVE GONE THIS WAY. BUT THE TUNNELS ARE STARTING TO CRISSCROSS.
MAYBE I SHOULD GO BACK UP TO THE SURFACE, BRING THE PANTHEON IN ON...
EH?
THIS WAY!
TYRANNUS'S SECRET HIDEOUT
LARGE GREEN INDIVIDUALS WELCOME
SOMEBODY IS *DEFINITELY* YANKING MY CHAIN HERE.
OKAY. I'LL BITE. AND IF IT'S A TRAP...
THEN THAT'LL JUST BE *THEIR* PROBLEM.
MASTER! THE *HULK* IS APPROACHING!
GOOD. MOLE MAN, PLEASE... *YOU* GO TO HIM. TELL HIM MY TERMS. I CAN'T *STAND* THE THOUGHT OF HIM SEEING ME 'N THIS HIDEOUS, AGED CONDITION.
OH, *YOU'RE* VAIN, AND *I* SHOULD TAKE THE RISK.

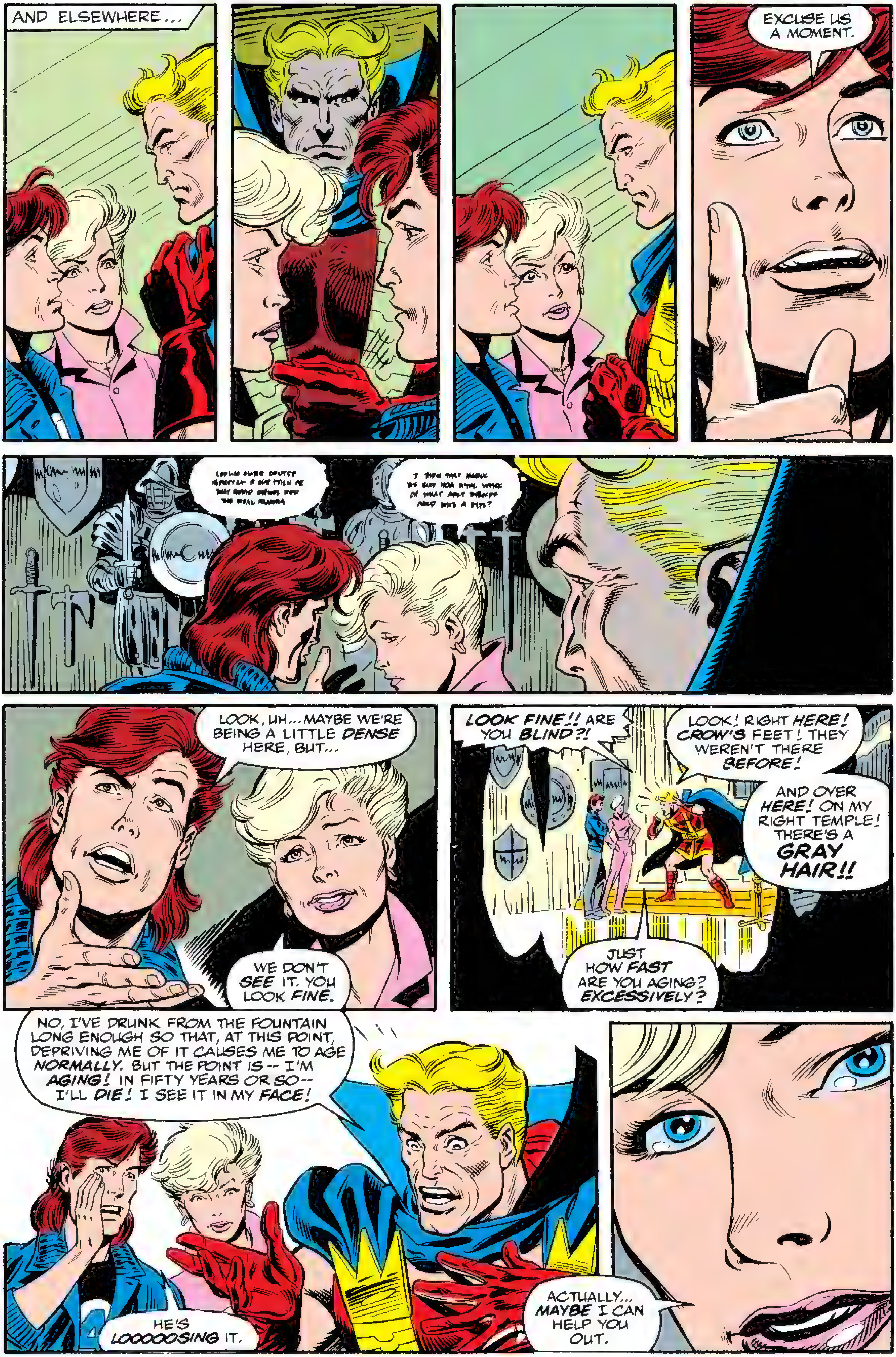

"HE'LL MAKE NO MOVE AGAINST YOU AS LONG AS I HAVE THESE TWO PRISONER. *PLEASE,* MOLE MAN, I'M...
"...I'M *BEGGING* YOU. PLEASE."
GREETINGS, HULK.
I'M TOLD WE CAN EXPECT A HIGHER LEVEL OF CONVERSATION FROM YOU THESE DAYS.
WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT IS THAT I'LL BRING THIS PLACE DOWN AROUND YOUR *EARS* IF YOU DON'T RELEASE BETTY AND RICK.
AND AROUND *THEIRS* AS WELL? I THINK *NOT.* BUT WE'LL LET THEM GO, HULK... *IF* YOU SAVE A MAN'S LIFE.
WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT?

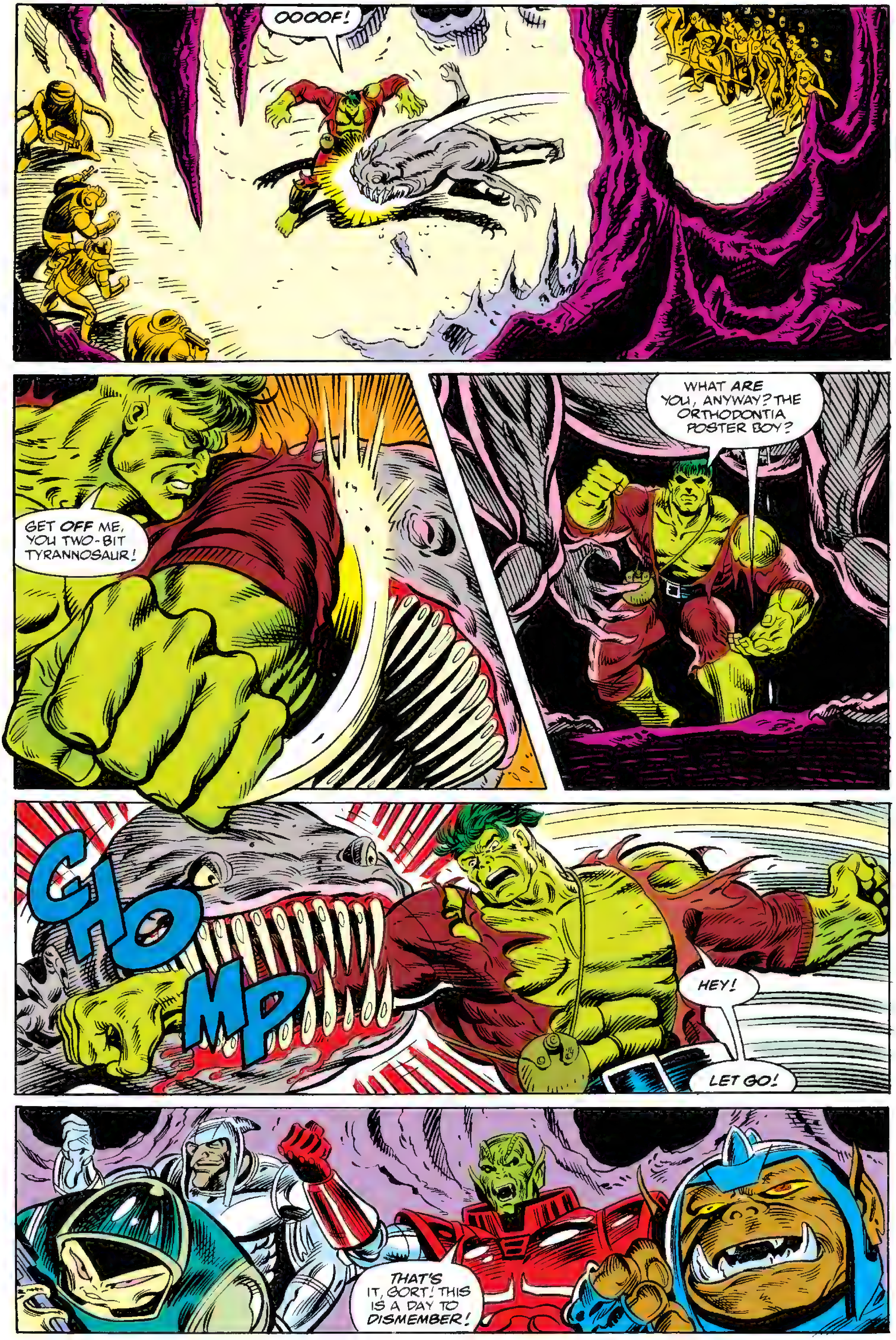

OF COURSE I FEAR IT! DON'T THE TWO OF YOU?
SO THIS WHOLE THING IS BECAUSE YOU'RE CUT OFF FROM YOUR FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH, AND NOW YOU'RE AFRAID OF *DYING*.
IT'S A WORRY WHEN NUTS LIKE *YOU* KIDNAP ME.
OTHERWISE, I DON'T THINK ABOUT IT MUCH.
HOW CAN YOU *NOT?!* I'VE LIVED *CENTURIES*, AND THE PROSPECT OF AGE AND DEATH NOW FILL MY EVERY WAKING MOMENT!
YOU ONLY LIVE A FEW PALTRY DECADES! HOW CAN LIFE'S END *NOT* CONCERN YOU?
IT JUST DOESN'T. MAYBE BECAUSE OUR LIVES ARE SO *SHORT*...
...WE CONCENTRATE ALL OUR ENERGY ON LIVING AND DON'T THINK ABOUT THE INEVITABLE.
NOT THINK ABOUT YOUR SKIN BECOMING WRINKLED, LIKE PARCHMENT, AND FLAKING *AWAY?*
NOT THINK ABOUT YOUR HAIR TURNING WHITE, BRITTLE... YOUR HEAD *SCABROUS* AND *BALDING!* YOUR TEETH ROTTING AND FALLING OUT, YOUR GUMS *BLACKENING* WITH DISEASE! BECOMING HIDEOUS, REVILED...
YOU DON'T *UNDERSTAND!* BUT THEN... YOU *COULDN'T*, UNLESS YOU SAW WHAT BEING WITHOUT THE FOUNTAIN HAS *DONE* TO ME!
ALL *RIGHT* THEN! SEE WHAT MY SUBTERRANEANS HAVE *NOT!* LOOK UPON THE FACE I WON'T EVEN SHOW TO THE *MOLE MAN!* LOOK IN HORROR ON THE FACE OF--

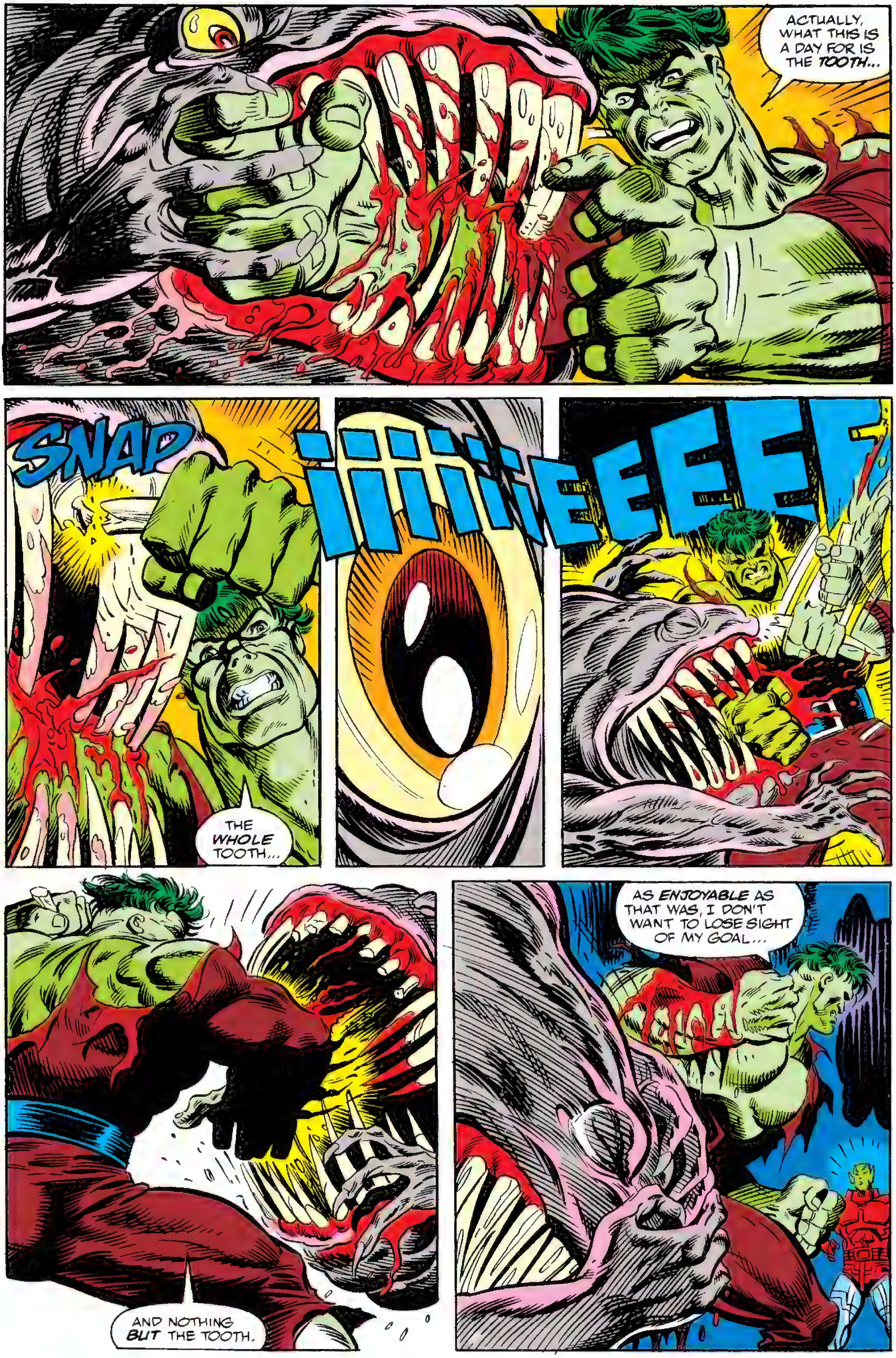

TYRANNUS!!

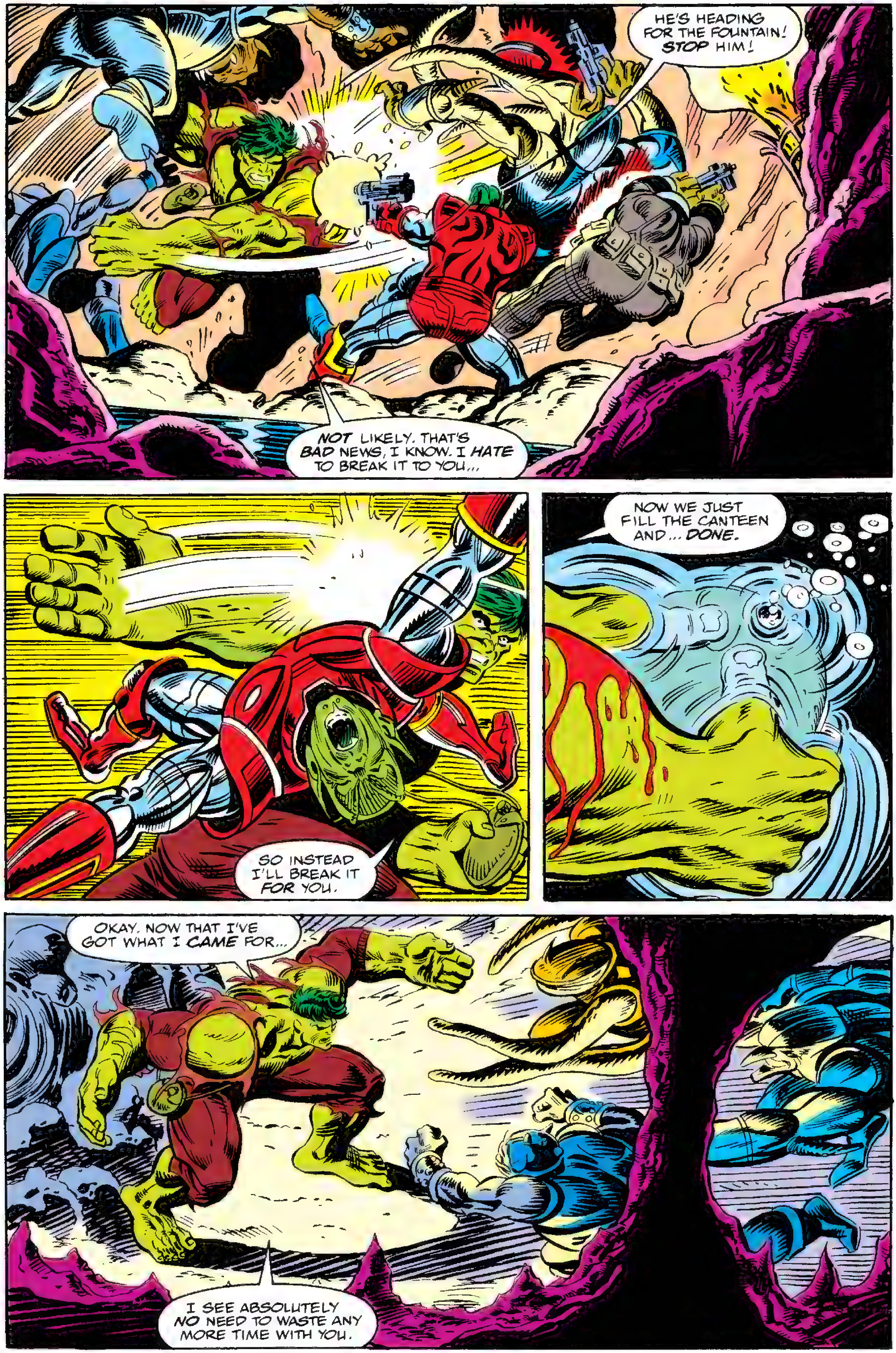

ALL RIGHT, MY DEVIANTS. THE PERIMETER IS *SECURED.*
STILL, WE MUST BE *CAUTIOUS.* TYRANNUS WANTS THIS YOUTH-SOURCE BACK, AND WE MAY SHORTLY BE UNDER ATTACK.
YOU ARE ONE BUTT-UGLY PETTY DICTATOR, YOU KNOW THAT?
YOUR PERIMETER'S BEEN *BREACHED,* BRUTUS, AND UNLESS YOU'D LIKE YOUR *HEAD* TO FOLLOW SUIT...
YOU'LL BACK OFF NOW BEFORE WE HAVE TO BEHAVE IN AN *UNCIVILIZED* FASHION.
HULK! BEHIND YOU!
THAT'S YOUR NEXT *MEAL,* GORT! *GET* HIM!


KILL HIM, GORT! HE'S ONLY A LIGHT *SNACK* FOR YOU!
WUMP
KLUD
SNAP
HMM.
GORT... KLAATU BARADA NIKTO?
CHOMP
NO, I DIDN'T *THINK* THAT WOULD WORK.

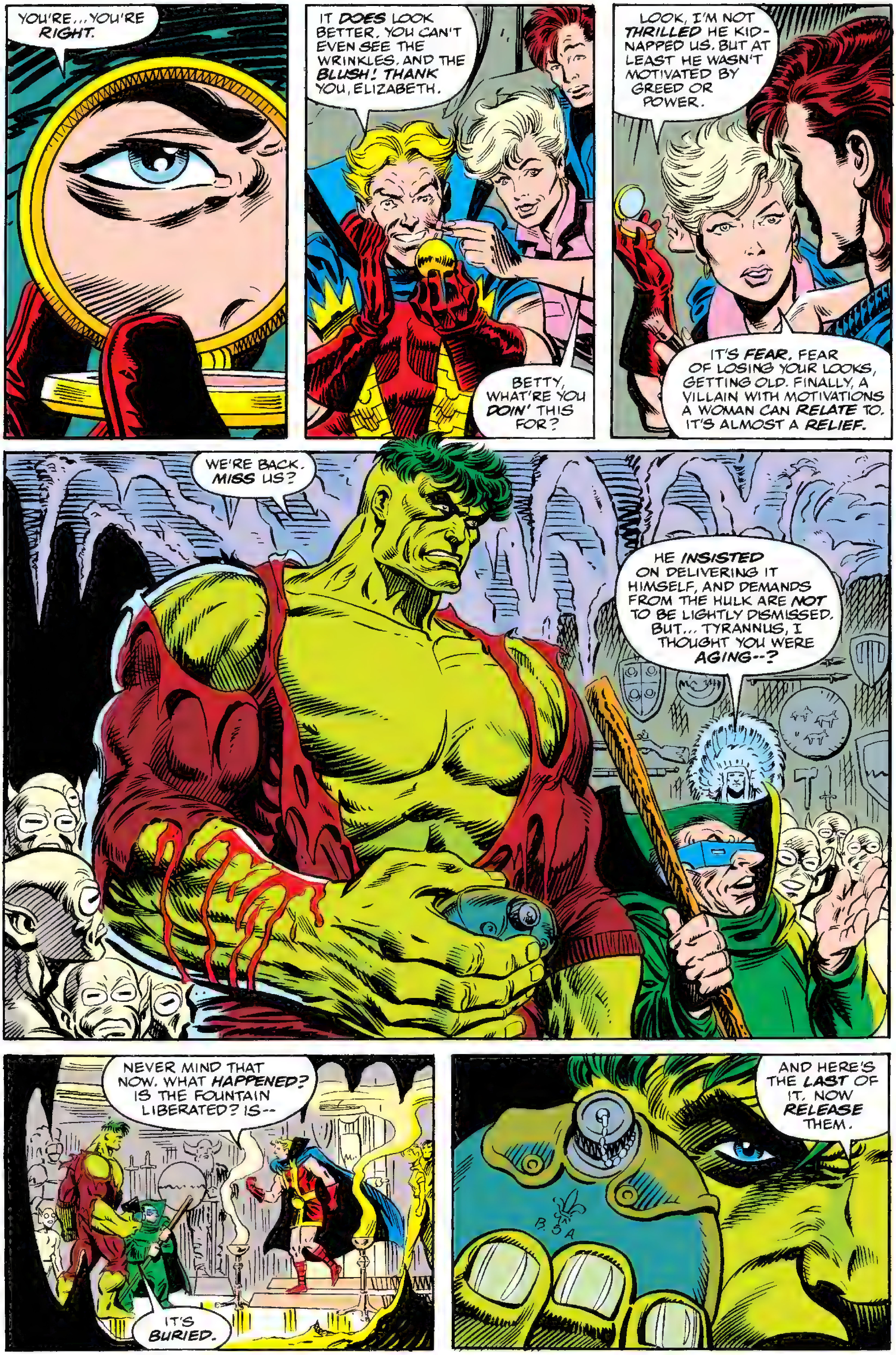

AND ELSEWHERE...
EXCUSE US A MOMENT.
LOOK, UH... MAYBE WE'RE BEING A LITTLE *DENSE* HERE, BUT...
WE DON'T *SEE* IT. YOU LOOK *FINE*.
LOOK FINE!! ARE YOU *BLIND?!*
LOOK! RIGHT *HERE! CROW'S* FEET! THEY WEREN'T THERE *BEFORE!*
AND OVER *HERE!* ON MY RIGHT TEMPLE! THERE'S A **GRAY HAIR!!**
JUST HOW *FAST* ARE YOU AGING? *EXCESSIVELY?*
NO, I'VE DRUNK FROM THE FOUNTAIN LONG ENOUGH SO THAT, AT THIS POINT, DEPRIVING ME OF IT CAUSES ME TO AGE *NORMALLY.* BUT THE POINT IS -- I'M *AGING!* IN FIFTY YEARS OR SO-- I'LL *DIE!* I SEE IT IN MY *FACE!*
HE'S *LOOOOOSING* IT.
ACTUALLY... *MAYBE* I CAN HELP YOU OUT.

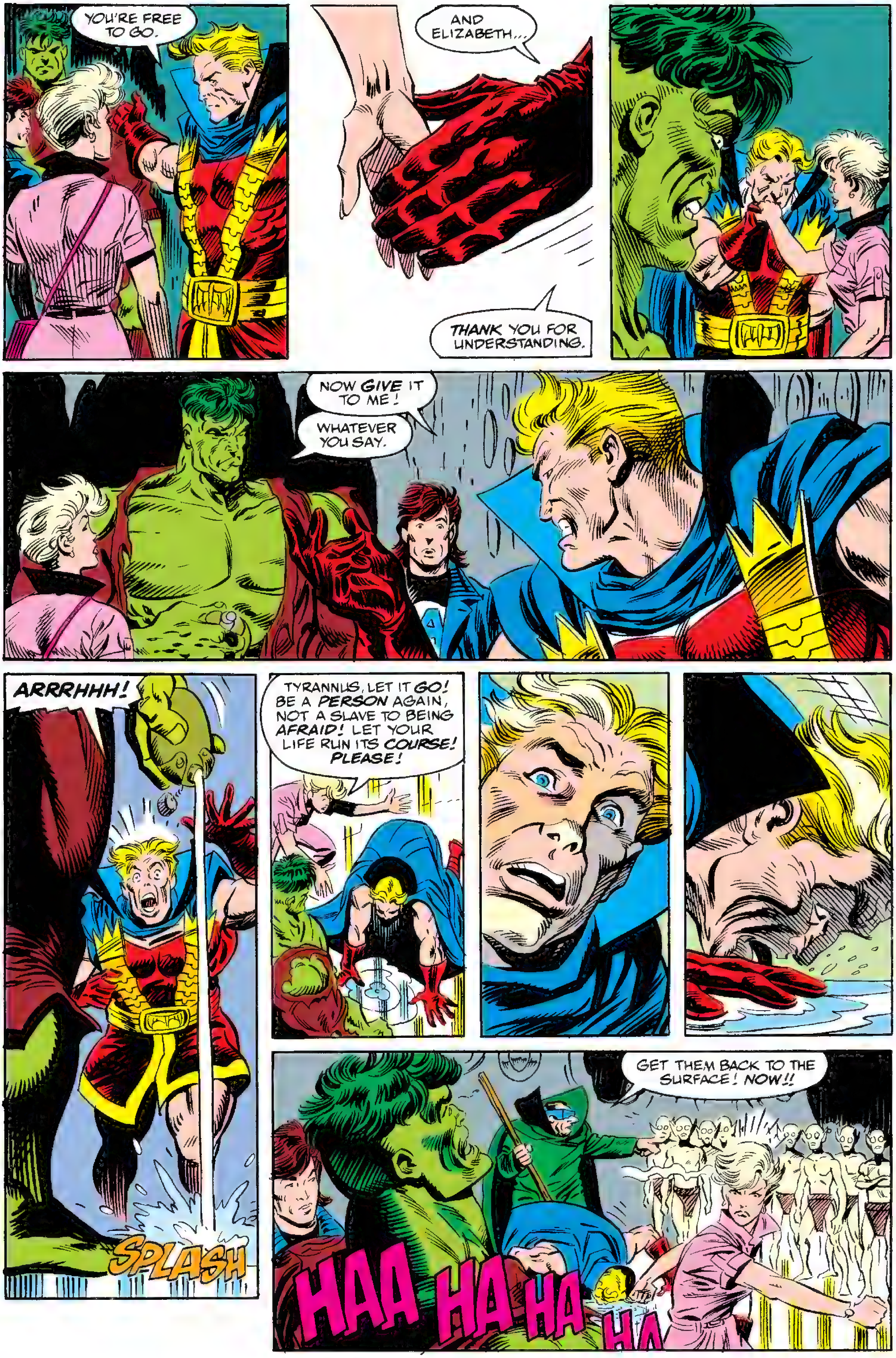

OOOOF!
GET OFF ME, YOU TWO-BIT TYRANNOSAUR!
WHAT ARE YOU, ANYWAY? THE ORTHODONTIA POSTER BOY?
CHOMP
HEY!
LET GO!
THAT'S IT, GORT! THIS IS A DAY TO DISMEMBER!

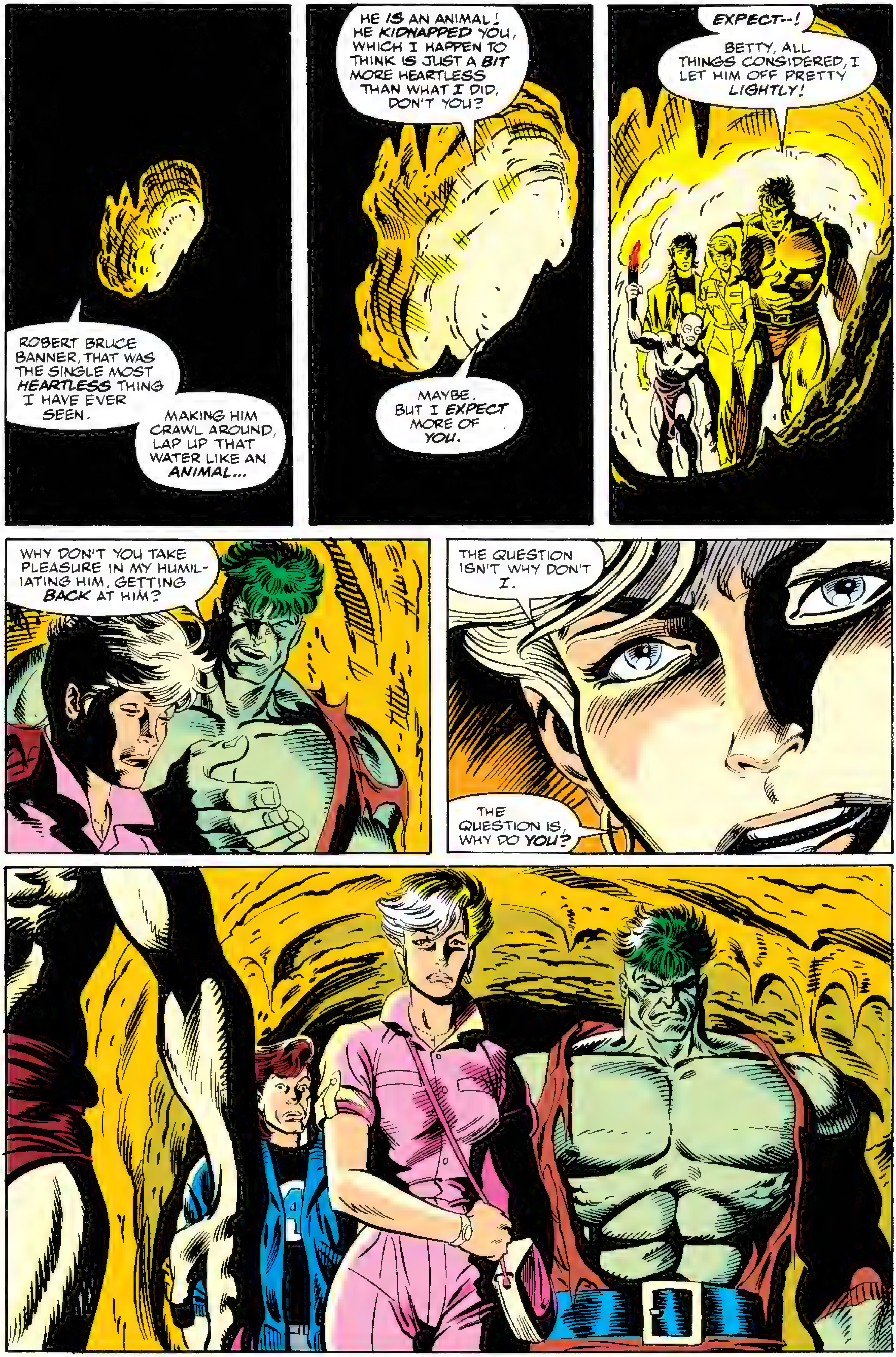

ACTUALLY, WHAT THIS IS A DAY FOR IS THE *TOOTH*...
SNAP
iiiiiiEEEEE
THE *WHOLE* TOOTH...
AND NOTHING *BUT* THE TOOTH.
AS *ENJOYABLE* AS THAT WAS, I DON'T WANT TO LOSE SIGHT OF MY GOAL...

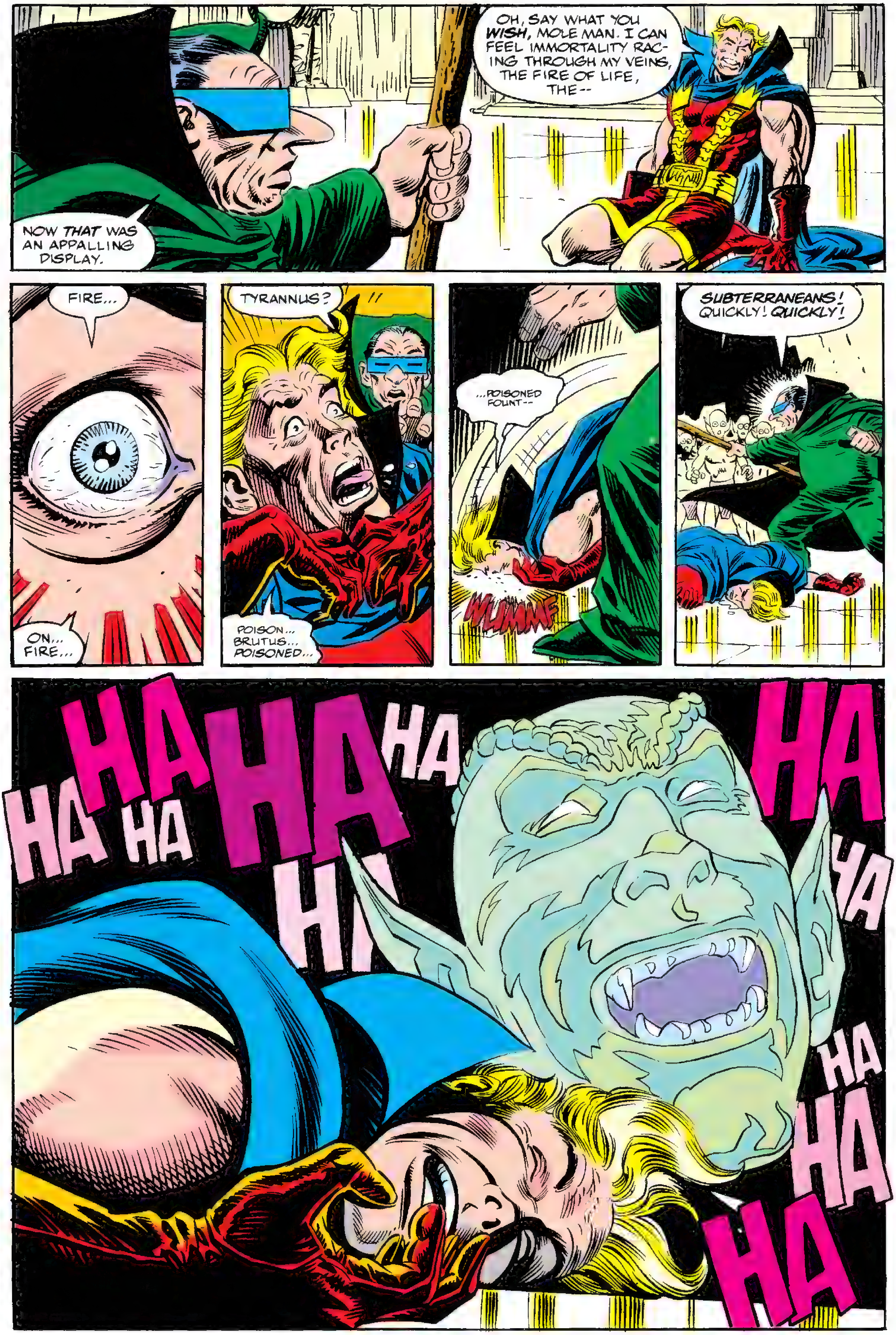

HE'S HEADING FOR THE FOUNTAIN! STOP HIM!
NOT LIKELY. THAT'S BAD NEWS, I KNOW. I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU...
SO INSTEAD I'LL BREAK IT FOR YOU.
NOW WE JUST FILL THE CANTEEN AND... DONE.
OKAY. NOW THAT I'VE GOT WHAT I CAME FOR...
I SEE ABSOLUTELY NO NEED TO WASTE ANY MORE TIME WITH YOU.

HULK, NO! NOT THE HANDS! NOT THE H--
RUMBBBBLE
RUN! HURRY, MY DEVIANTS! HURRY!
I WAS TRYING TO WARN YOU THAT THAT MIGHT HAPPEN.
HMM. LOOKS LIKE YOU SHOULD HAVE WARNED ME A LITTLE SOONER.


YOU'RE... YOU'RE RIGHT.
IT DOES LOOK BETTER. YOU CAN'T EVEN SEE THE WRINKLES, AND THE BLUSH! THANK YOU, ELIZABETH.
BETTY, WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' THIS FOR?
LOOK, I'M NOT THRILLED HE KIDNAPPED US. BUT AT LEAST HE WASN'T MOTIVATED BY GREED OR POWER.
IT'S FEAR. FEAR OF LOSING YOUR LOOKS, GETTING OLD. FINALLY, A VILLAIN WITH MOTIVATIONS A WOMAN CAN RELATE TO. IT'S ALMOST A RELIEF.
WE'RE BACK. MISS US?
HE INSISTED ON DELIVERING IT HIMSELF, AND DEMANDS FROM THE HULK ARE NOT TO BE LIGHTLY DISMISSED. BUT... TYRANNUS, I THOUGHT YOU WERE AGING--?
NEVER MIND THAT NOW. WHAT HAPPENED? IS THE FOUNTAIN LIBERATED? IS--
IT'S BURIED.
AND HERE'S THE LAST OF IT. NOW RELEASE THEM.

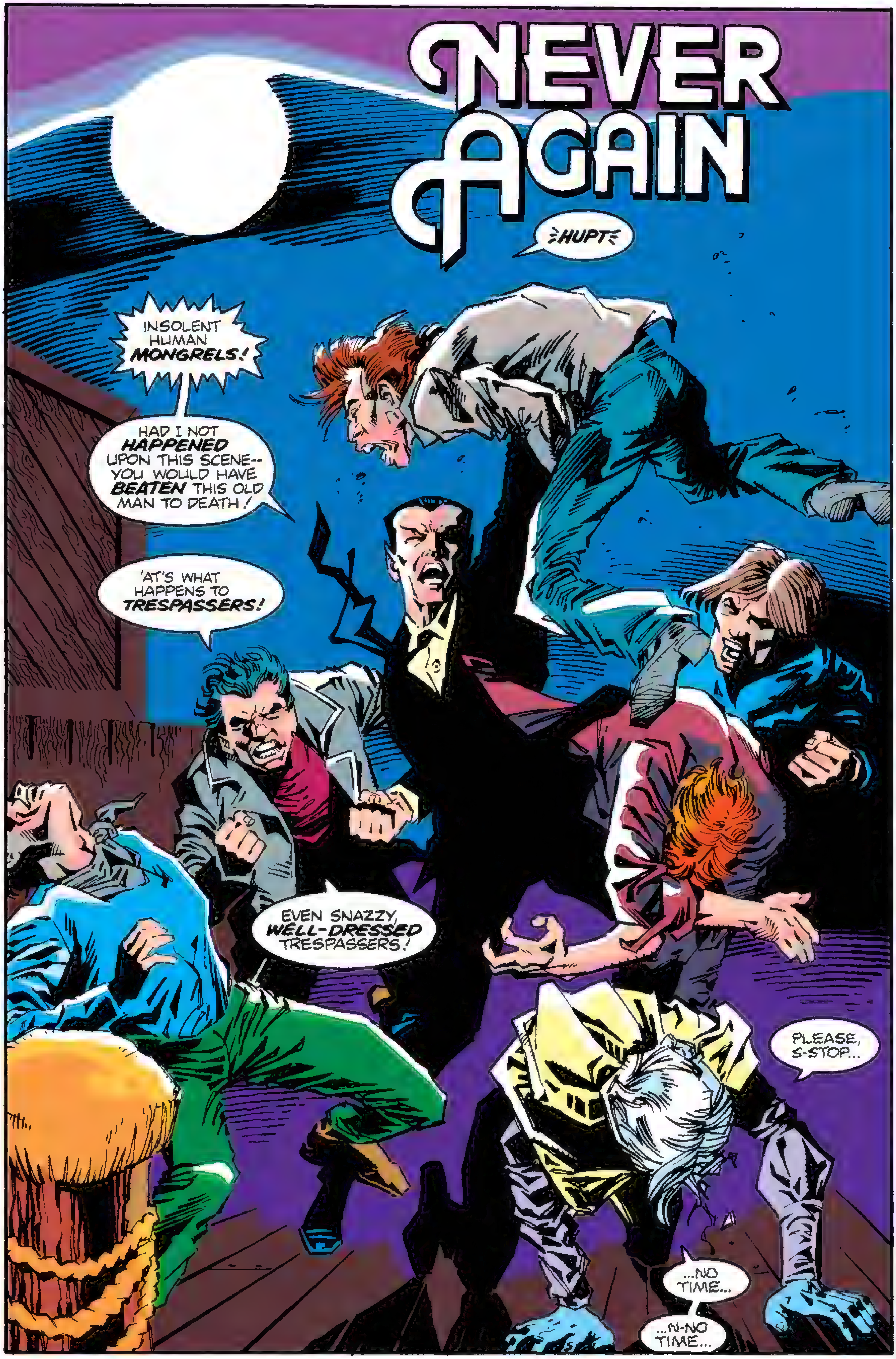

YOU'RE FREE TO GO.
AND ELIZABETH...
THANK YOU FOR UNDERSTANDING.
NOW GIVE IT TO ME!
WHATEVER YOU SAY.
ARRRHHH!
SPLASH
TYRANNUS, LET IT GO! BE A PERSON AGAIN, NOT A SLAVE TO BEING AFRAID! LET YOUR LIFE RUN ITS COURSE! PLEASE!
GET THEM BACK TO THE SURFACE! NOW!!
HAA HA HA HA

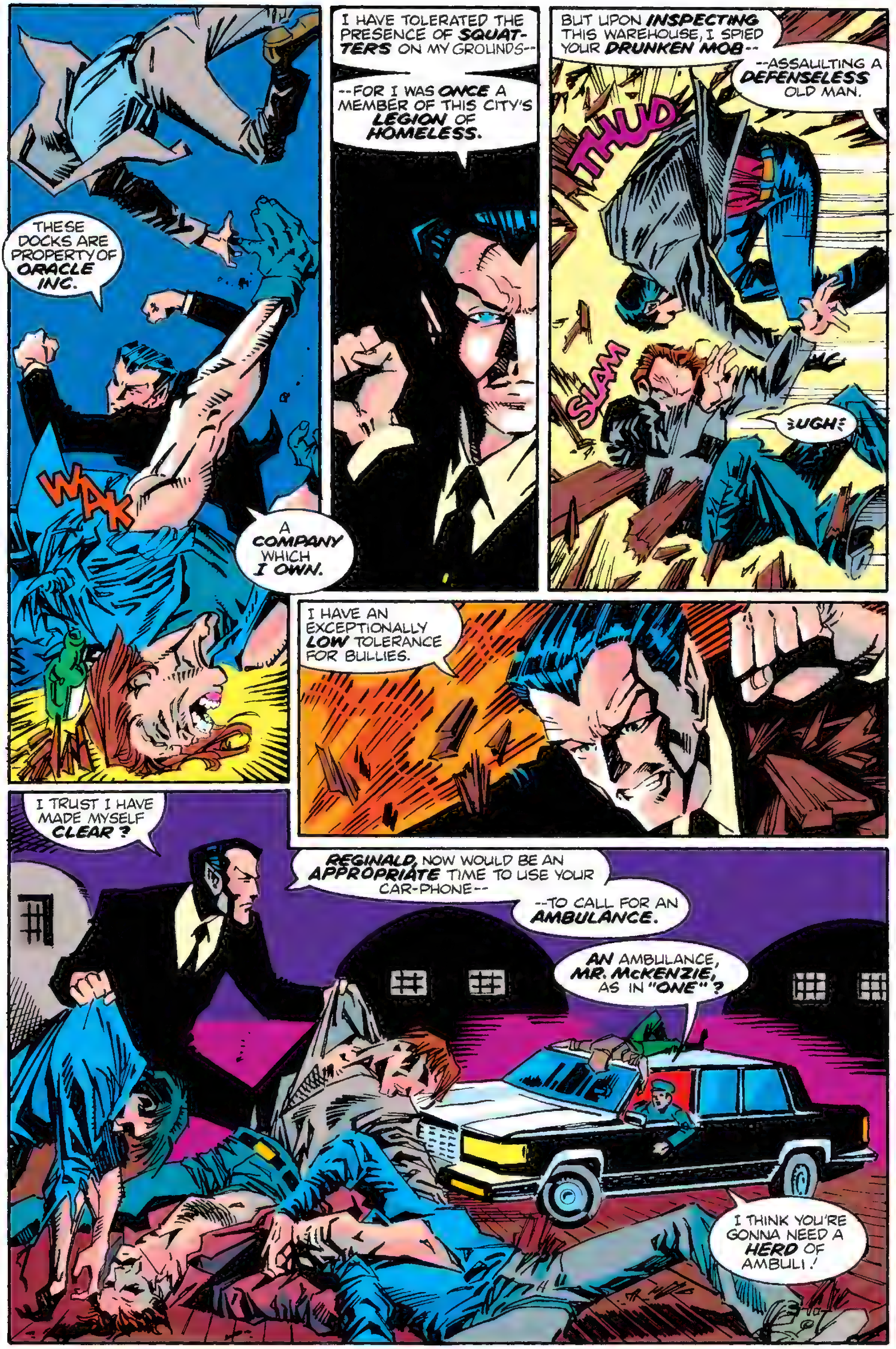

ROBERT BRUCE BANNER, THAT WAS THE SINGLE MOST **HEARTLESS** THING I HAVE EVER SEEN.
MAKING HIM CRAWL AROUND, LAP UP THAT WATER LIKE AN **ANIMAL...**
HE **IS** AN ANIMAL! HE **KIDNAPPED** YOU, WHICH I HAPPEN TO THINK IS JUST A **BIT** MORE HEARTLESS THAN WHAT **I** DID, DON'T YOU?
MAYBE. BUT I **EXPECT** MORE OF **YOU.**
EXPECT--!
BETTY, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, I LET HIM OFF PRETTY **LIGHTLY!**
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE PLEASURE IN MY HUMILIATING HIM, GETTING **BACK** AT HIM?
THE QUESTION ISN'T WHY DON'T **I.**
THE QUESTION IS, WHY DO **YOU?**

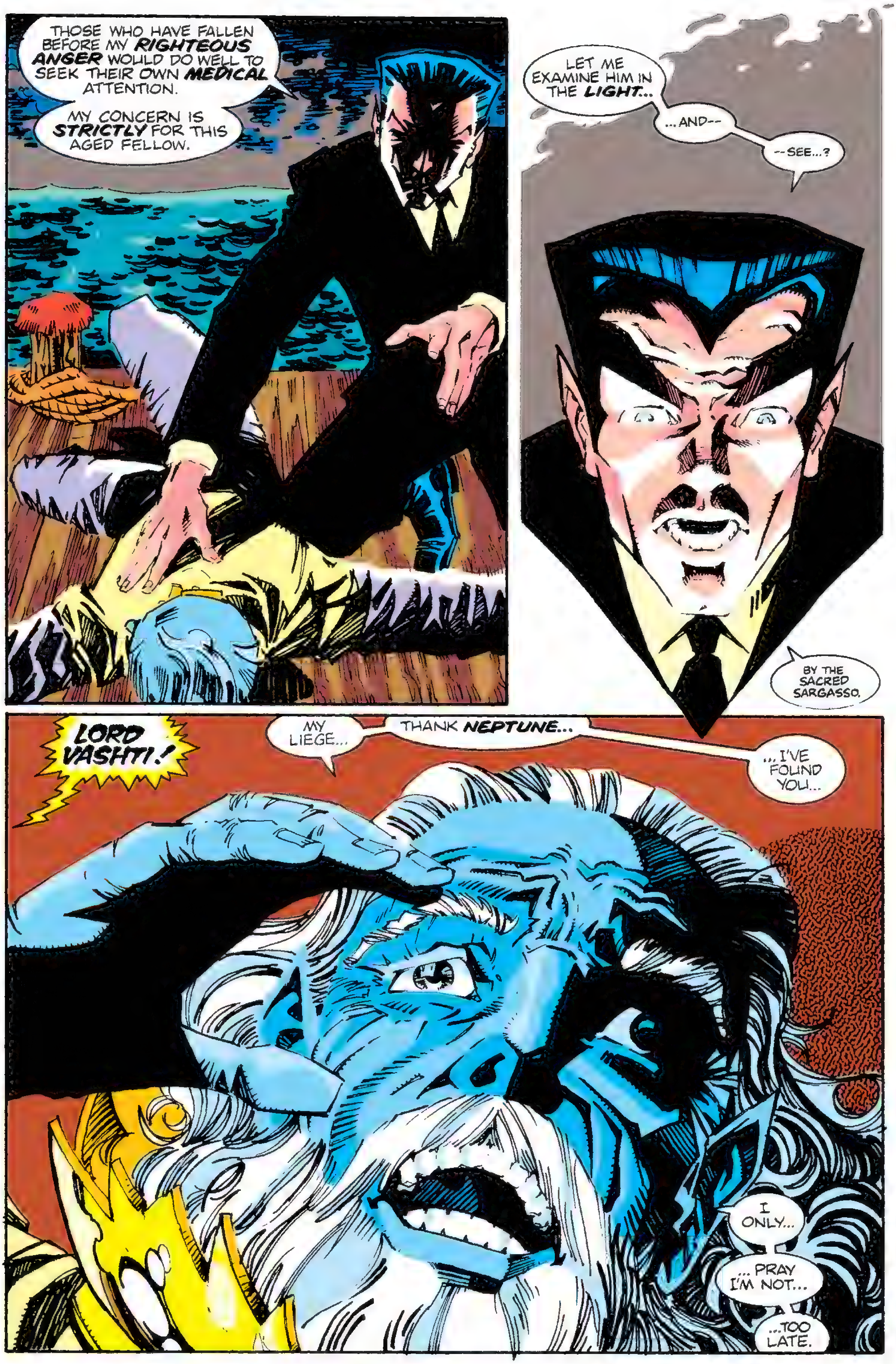

NOW *THAT* WAS AN APPALLING DISPLAY.
OH, SAY WHAT YOU *WISH,* MOLE MAN. I CAN FEEL IMMORTALITY RACING THROUGH MY VEINS, THE FIRE OF LIFE, THE--
FIRE...
ON... FIRE...
TYRANNUS?
POISON... BRUTUS... POISONED...
...POISONED FOUNT--
WUMMF
SUBTERRANEANS! QUICKLY! QUICKLY!
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

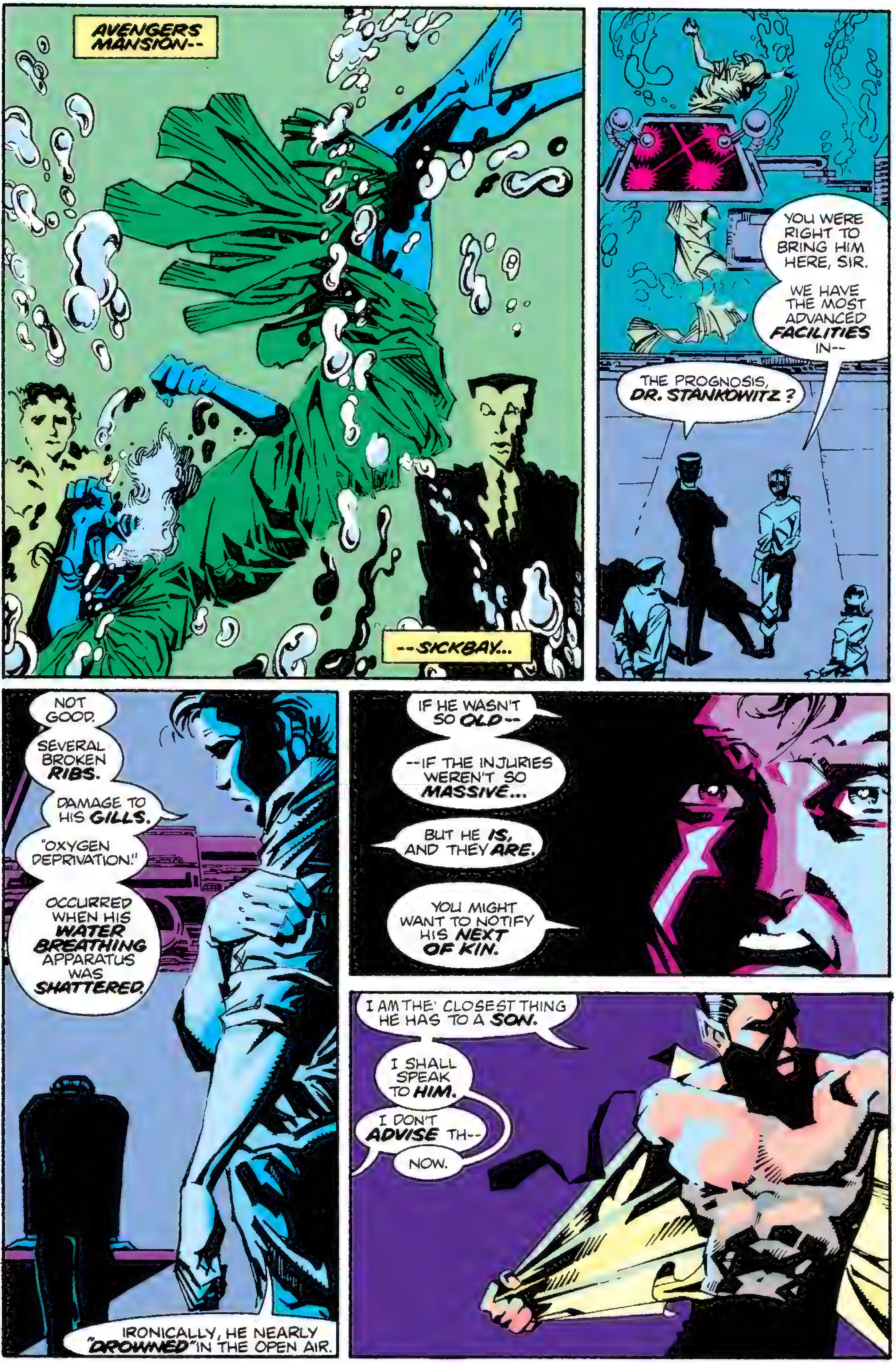
MARVEL COMICS
ANNUAL
PART 3
SUBTERRANEAN WARS™
64 PAGES
$2.00/ $2.45 CAN.
NAMOR
1•1991
£1.00 UK
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
NAMOR™
THE SUB-MARINER®
FEATURING--
THE ORIGIN OF NAMOR™!
AND AN ALL-NEW INVADERS™ ADVENTURE!
50 YEARS OF CAPTAIN AMERICA
1941 – 1991
FRY '91 DANA 5.91

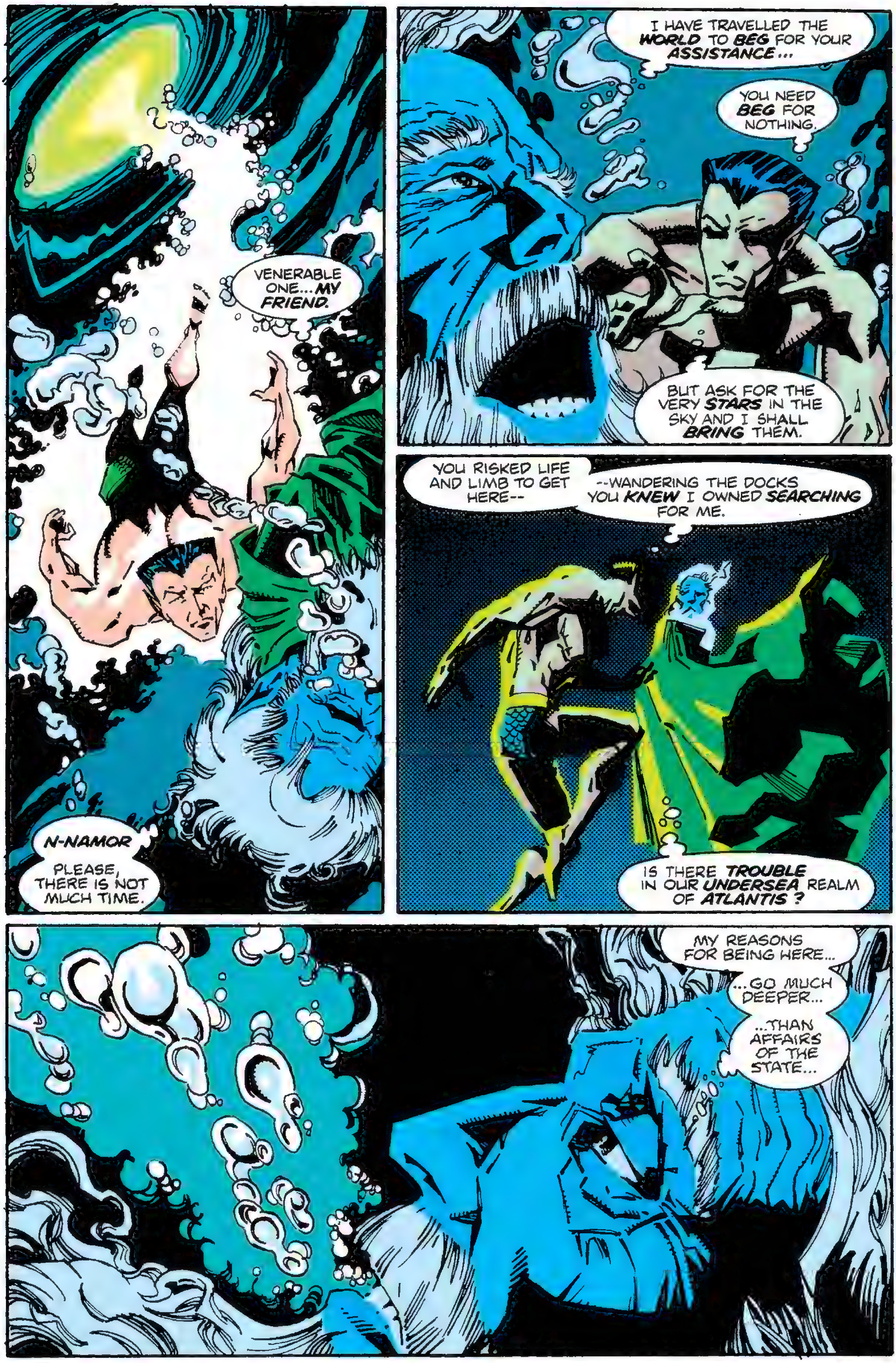
WRITER: SCOTT LOBDELL • PENCILER: JAMES FRY • INKER: ERIK LARSEN
COLORIST: MIKE THOMAS • LETTERER: DAVE SHARPE • EDITOR: TERRY KAVANAGH

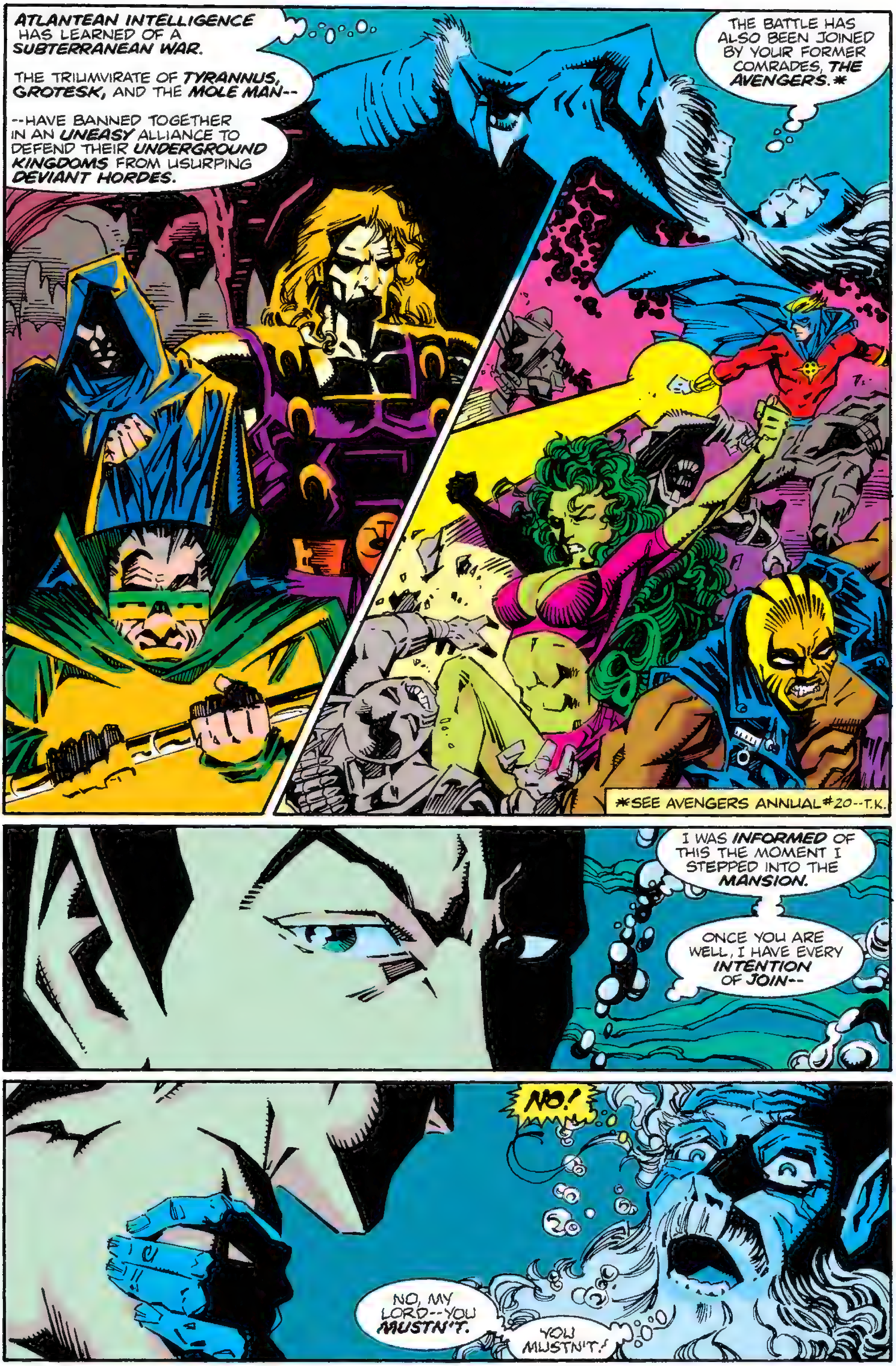

NEVER AGAIN
HUPT
INSOLENT HUMAN MONGRELS!
HAD I NOT HAPPENED UPON THIS SCENE-- YOU WOULD HAVE BEATEN THIS OLD MAN TO DEATH!
'AT'S WHAT HAPPENS TO TRESPASSERS!
EVEN SNAZZY, WELL-DRESSED TRESPASSERS!
PLEASE, S-STOP...
...NO TIME...
...N-NO TIME...

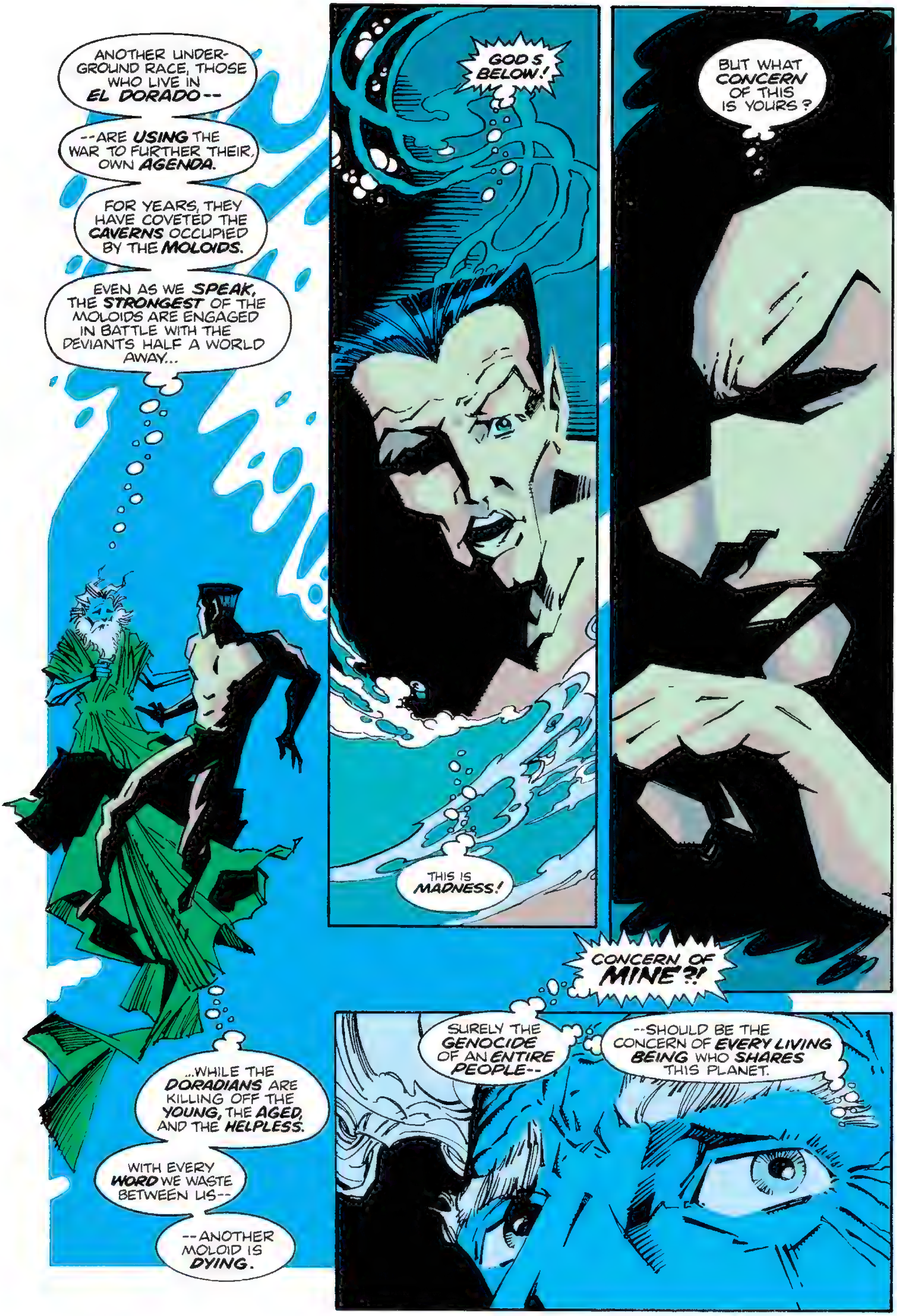

THESE DOCKS ARE PROPERTY OF ORACLE INC.
WAK
A COMPANY WHICH I OWN.
I HAVE TOLERATED THE PRESENCE OF SQUATTERS ON MY GROUNDS--
--FOR I WAS ONCE A MEMBER OF THIS CITY'S LEGION OF HOMELESS.
BUT UPON INSPECTING THIS WAREHOUSE, I SPIED YOUR DRUNKEN MOB--
--ASSAULTING A DEFENSELESS OLD MAN.
THUD
SLAM
UGH
I HAVE AN EXCEPTIONALLY LOW TOLERANCE FOR BULLIES.
I TRUST I HAVE MADE MYSELF CLEAR?
REGINALD, NOW WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO USE YOUR CAR-PHONE--
--TO CALL FOR AN AMBULANCE.
AN AMBULANCE, MR. McKENZIE, AS IN "ONE"?
I THINK YOU'RE GONNA NEED A HERD OF AMBULI!

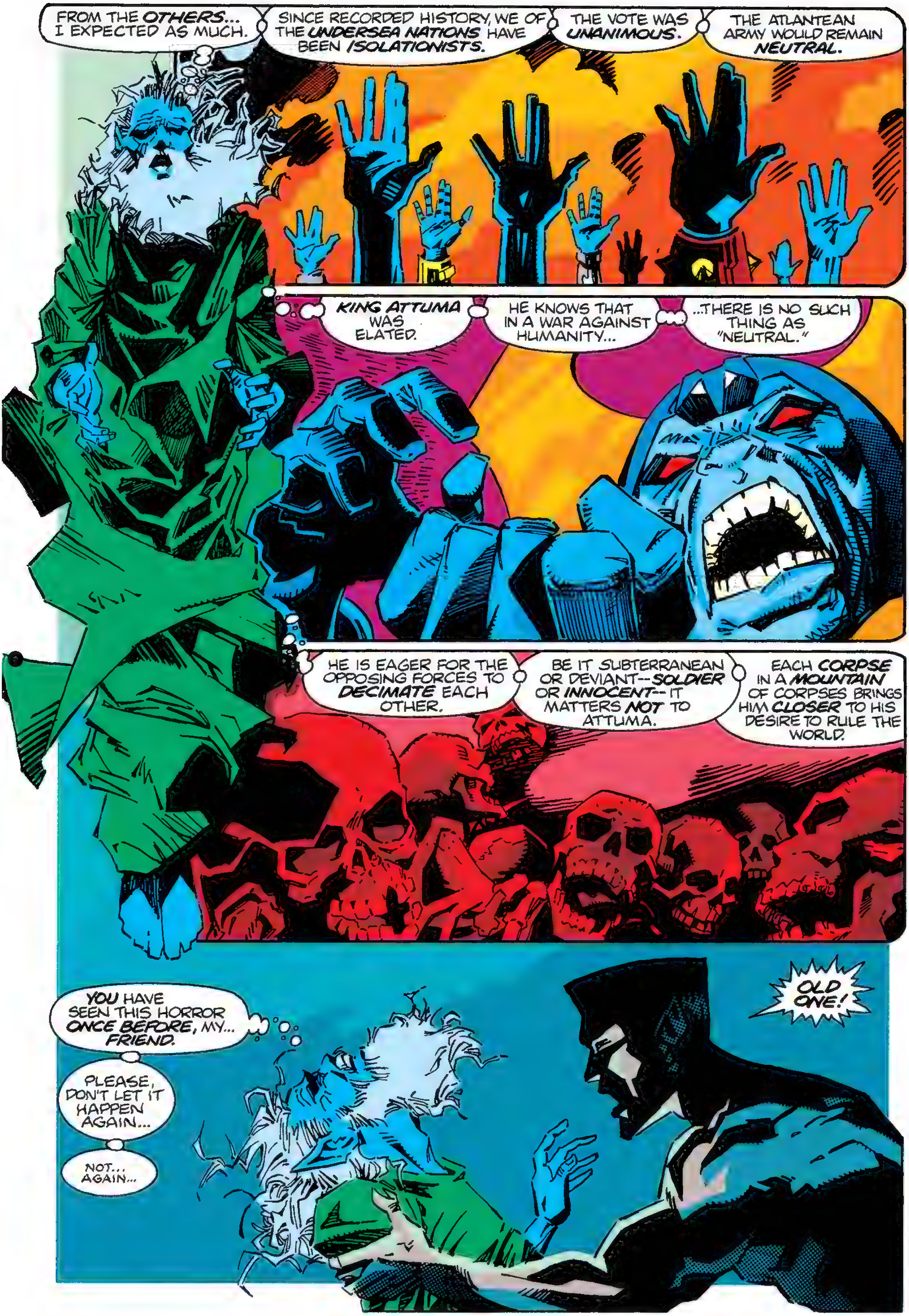

THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN BEFORE MY **RIGHTEOUS ANGER** WOULD DO WELL TO SEEK THEIR OWN **MEDICAL** ATTENTION.
MY CONCERN IS **STRICTLY** FOR THIS AGED FELLOW.
LET ME EXAMINE HIM IN THE **LIGHT...**
...AND--
--SEE...?
BY THE SACRED SARGASSO.
LORD VASHTI!
MY LIEGE...
THANK **NEPTUNE...**
...I'VE FOUND YOU...
I ONLY...
...PRAY I'M NOT...
...TOO LATE.

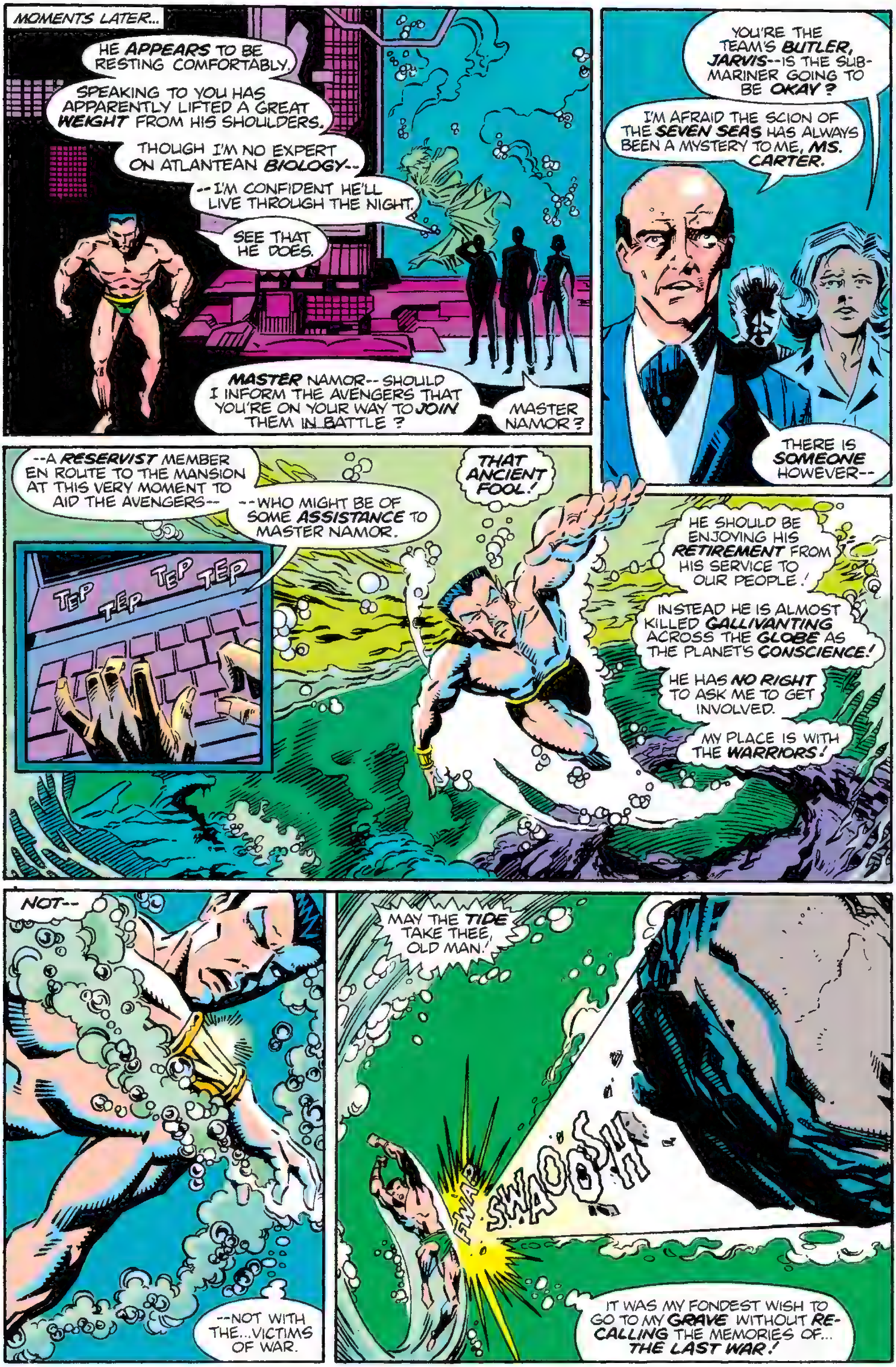

AVENGERS MANSION--
--SICKBAY...
YOU WERE RIGHT TO BRING HIM HERE, SIR.
WE HAVE THE MOST ADVANCED FACILITIES IN--
THE PROGNOSIS, DR. STANKOWITZ?
NOT GOOD.
SEVERAL BROKEN RIBS.
DAMAGE TO HIS GILLS.
"OXYGEN DEPRIVATION."
OCCURRED WHEN HIS WATER BREATHING APPARATUS WAS SHATTERED.
IRONICALLY, HE NEARLY "DROWNED" IN THE OPEN AIR.
IF HE WASN'T SO OLD--
--IF THE INJURIES WEREN'T SO MASSIVE...
BUT HE IS, AND THEY ARE.
YOU MIGHT WANT TO NOTIFY HIS NEXT OF KIN.
I AM THE CLOSEST THING HE HAS TO A SON.
I SHALL SPEAK TO HIM.
I DON'T ADVISE TH--
NOW.

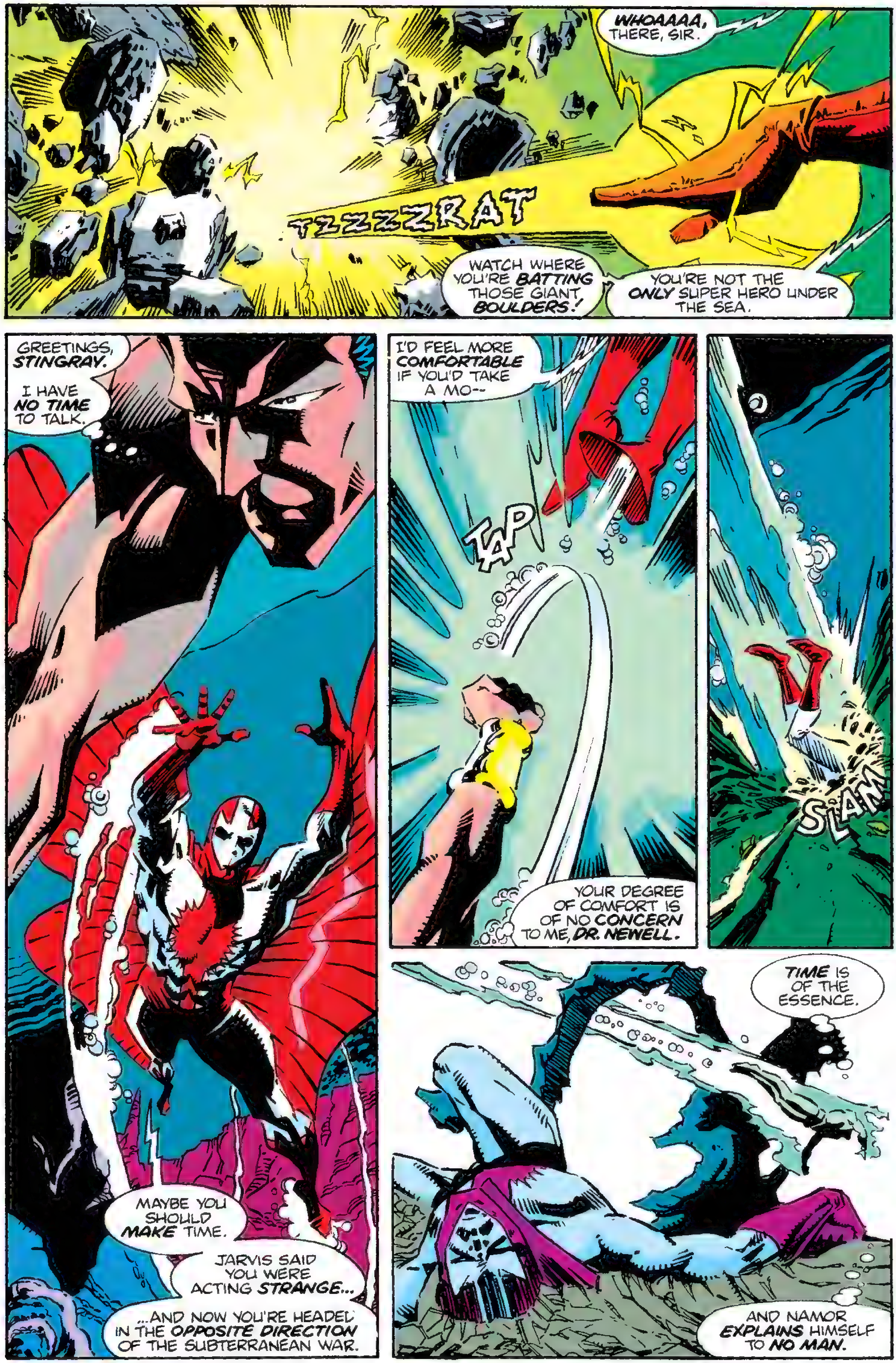

VENERABLE ONE... MY FRIEND.
N-NAMOR
PLEASE, THERE IS NOT MUCH TIME.
I HAVE TRAVELLED THE WORLD TO BEG FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE...
YOU NEED BEG FOR NOTHING.
BUT ASK FOR THE VERY STARS IN THE SKY AND I SHALL BRING THEM.
YOU RISKED LIFE AND LIMB TO GET HERE--
--WANDERING THE DOCKS YOU KNEW I OWNED SEARCHING FOR ME.
IS THERE TROUBLE IN OUR UNDERSEA REALM OF ATLANTIS ?
MY REASONS FOR BEING HERE...
...GO MUCH DEEPER...
...THAN AFFAIRS OF THE STATE...

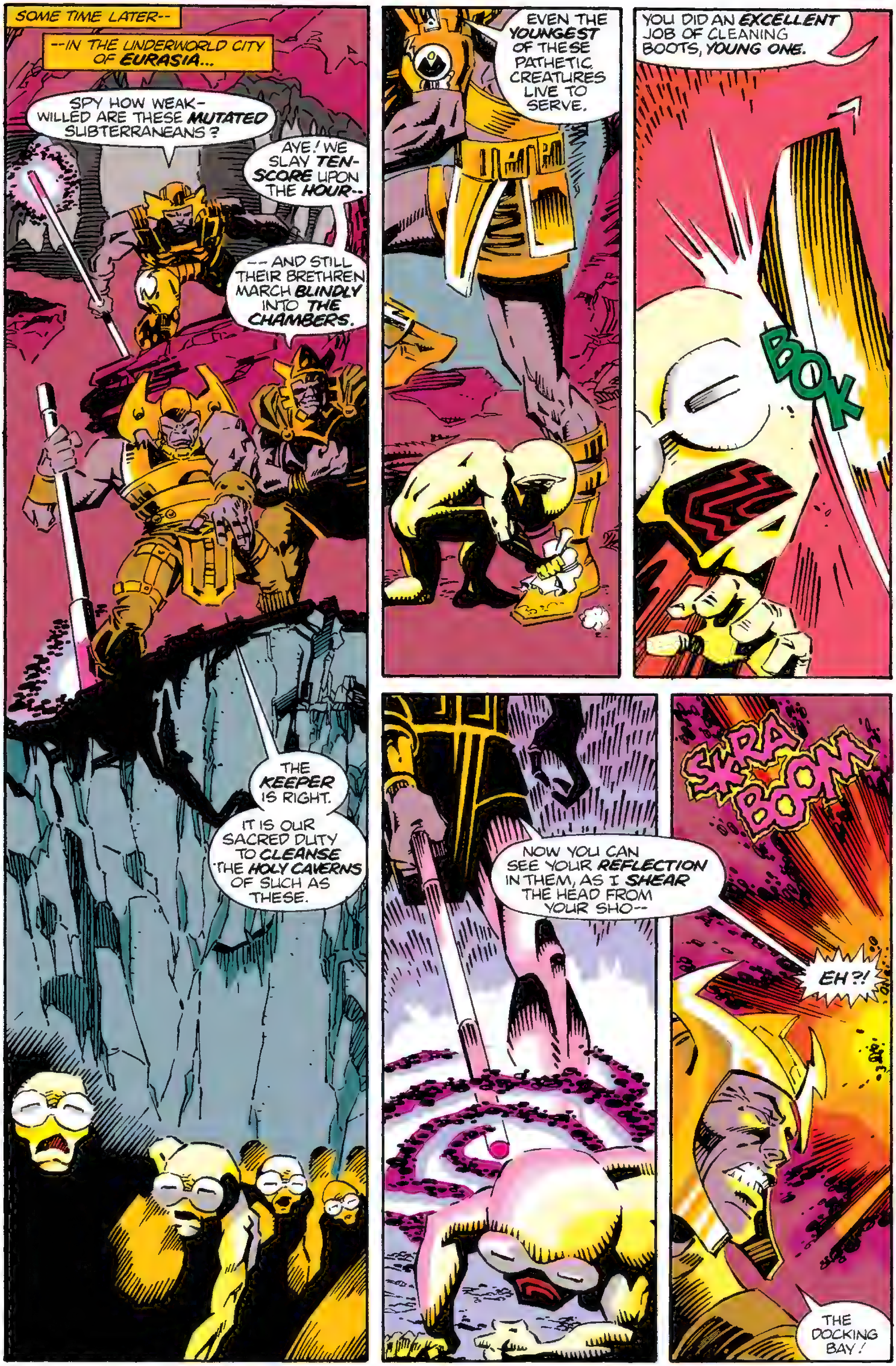

ATLANTEAN INTELLIGENCE HAS LEARNED OF A SUBTERRANEAN WAR.
THE TRIUMVIRATE OF TYRANNUS, GROTESK, AND THE MOLE MAN--
--HAVE BANNED TOGETHER IN AN UNEASY ALLIANCE TO DEFEND THEIR UNDERGROUND KINGDOMS FROM USURPING DEVIANT HORDES.
THE BATTLE HAS ALSO BEEN JOINED BY YOUR FORMER COMRADES, THE AVENGERS.*
*SEE AVENGERS ANNUAL #20--T.K.
I WAS INFORMED OF THIS THE MOMENT I STEPPED INTO THE MANSION.
ONCE YOU ARE WELL, I HAVE EVERY INTENTION OF JOIN--
NO!
NO, MY LORD--YOU MUSTN'T.
YOU MUSTN'T!

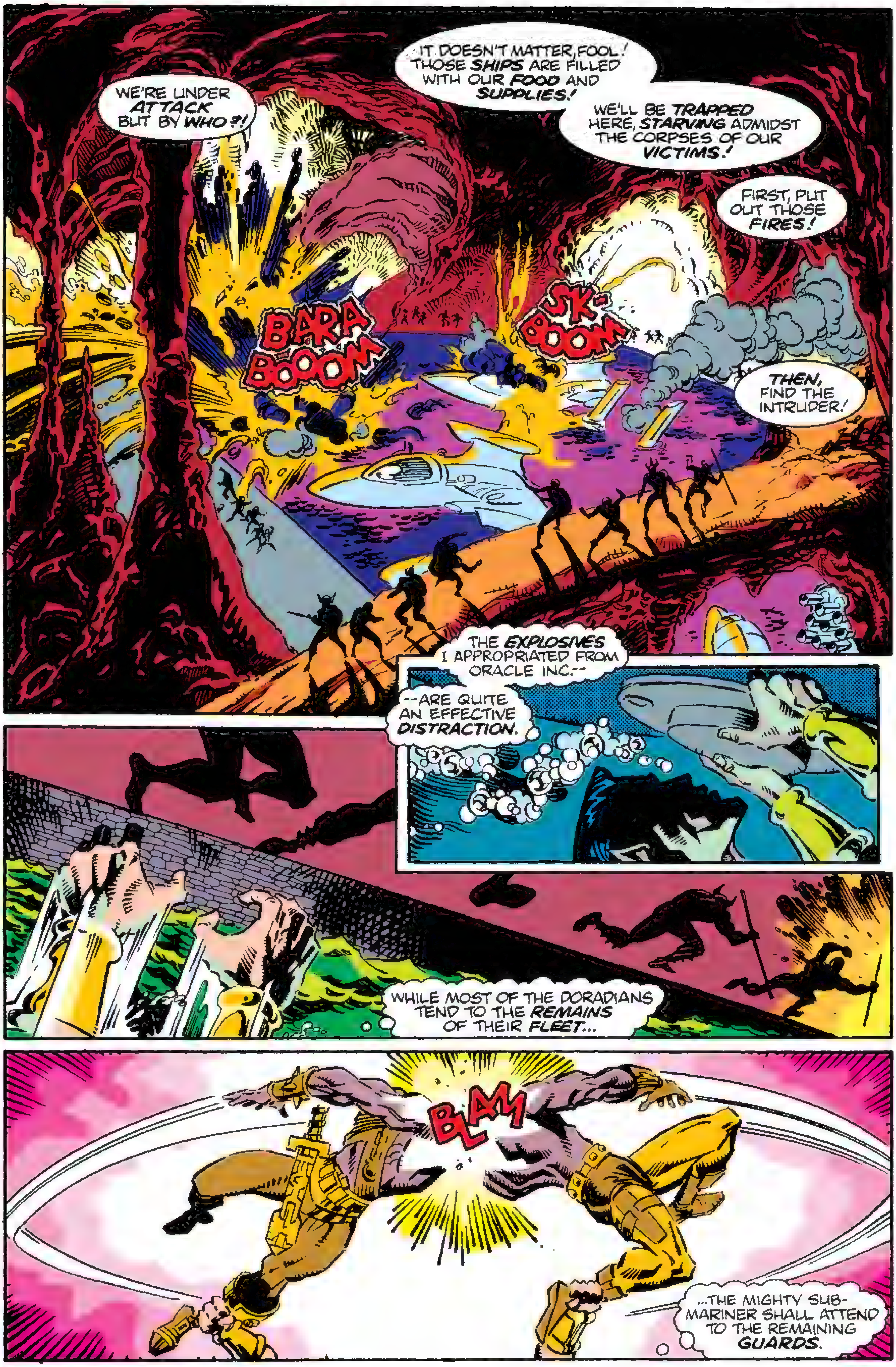

ANOTHER UNDERGROUND RACE, THOSE WHO LIVE IN **EL DORADO**--
--ARE **USING** THE WAR TO FURTHER THEIR OWN **AGENDA**.
FOR YEARS, THEY HAVE COVETED THE **CAVERNS** OCCUPIED BY THE **MOLOIDS**.
EVEN AS WE **SPEAK**, THE **STRONGEST** OF THE MOLOIDS ARE ENGAGED IN BATTLE WITH THE DEVIANTS HALF A WORLD AWAY...
...WHILE THE **DORADIANS** ARE KILLING OFF THE **YOUNG**, THE **AGED**, AND THE **HELPLESS**.
WITH EVERY **WORD** WE WASTE BETWEEN US--
--ANOTHER MOLOID IS **DYING**.
GODS BELOW!
THIS IS **MADNESS!**
BUT WHAT **CONCERN** OF THIS IS YOURS?
CONCERN OF **MINE?!**
SURELY THE **GENOCIDE** OF AN **ENTIRE PEOPLE**--
--SHOULD BE THE CONCERN OF **EVERY LIVING BEING** WHO **SHARES** THIS PLANET.

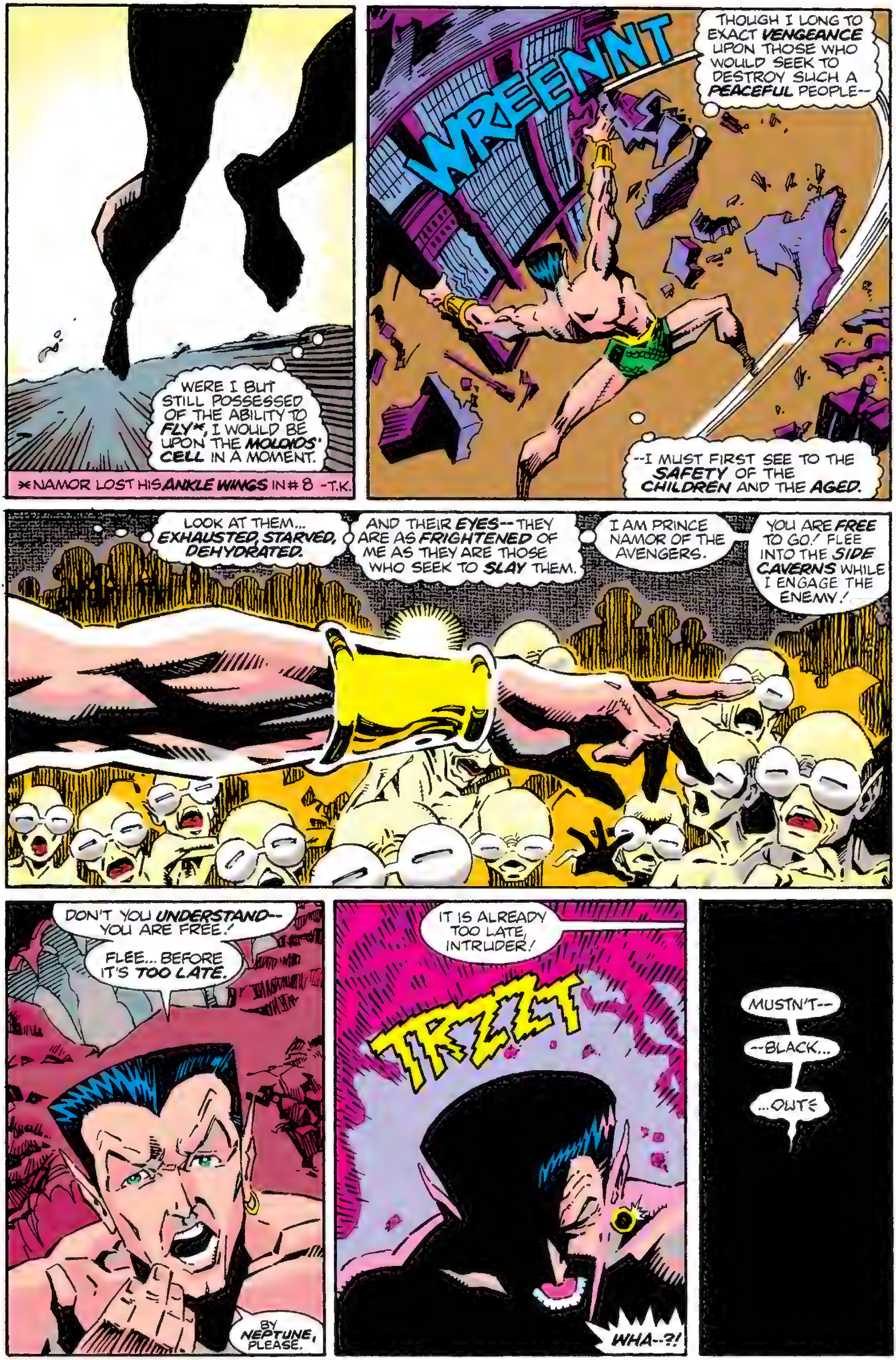

FROM THE OTHERS... I EXPECTED AS MUCH.
SINCE RECORDED HISTORY, WE OF THE UNDERSEA NATIONS HAVE BEEN ISOLATIONISTS.
THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.
THE ATLANTEAN ARMY WOULD REMAIN NEUTRAL.
KING ATTUMA WAS ELATED.
HE KNOWS THAT IN A WAR AGAINST HUMANITY...
...THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS "NEUTRAL."
HE IS EAGER FOR THE OPPOSING FORCES TO DECIMATE EACH OTHER.
BE IT SUBTERRANEAN OR DEVIANT--SOLDIER OR INNOCENT-- IT MATTERS NOT TO ATTUMA.
EACH CORPSE IN A MOUNTAIN OF CORPSES BRINGS HIM CLOSER TO HIS DESIRE TO RULE THE WORLD.
OLD ONE!
YOU HAVE SEEN THIS HORROR ONCE BEFORE, MY... FRIEND.
PLEASE, DON'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN...
NOT... AGAIN...

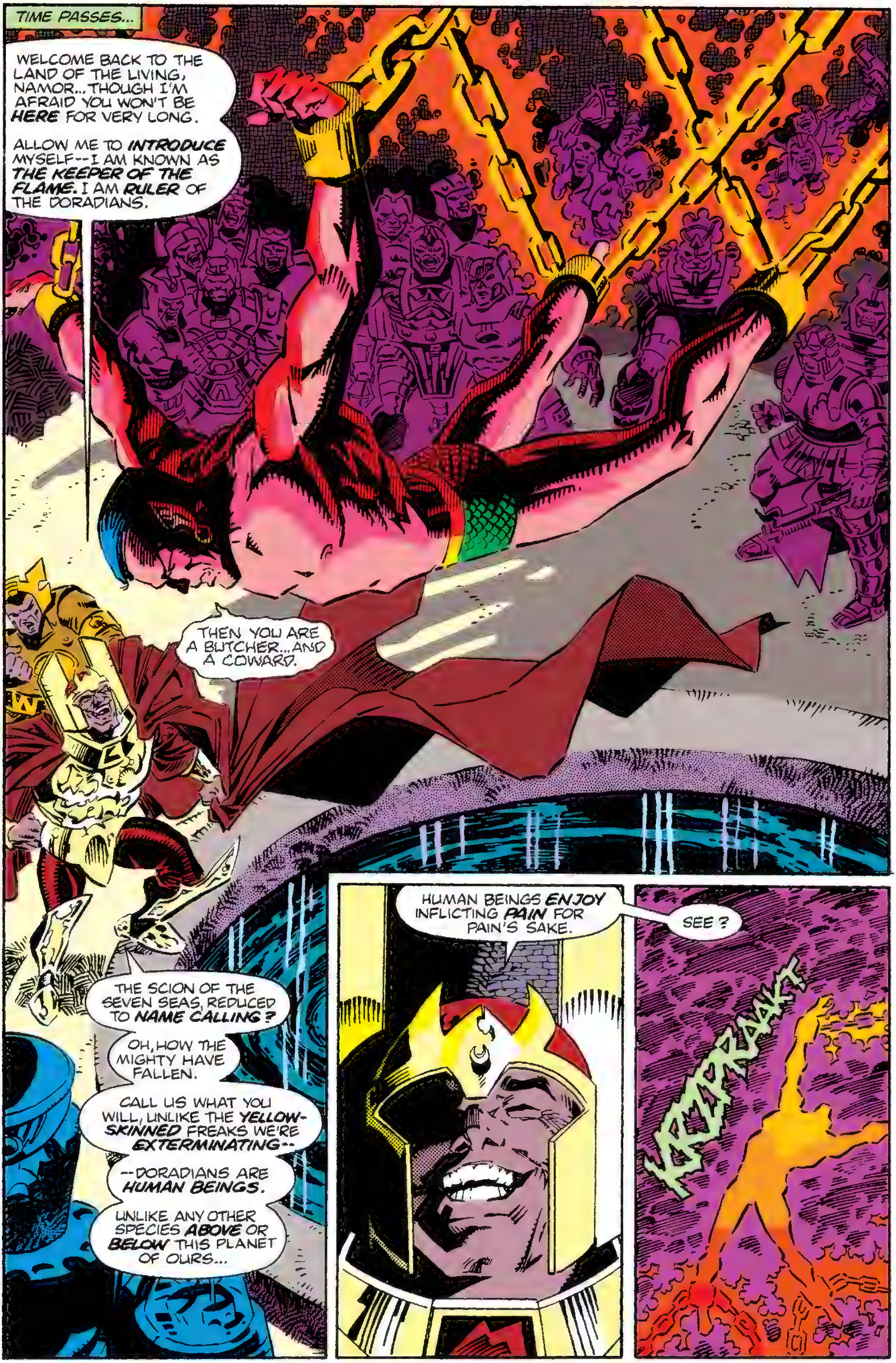

MOMENTS LATER...
HE APPEARS TO BE RESTING COMFORTABLY.
SPEAKING TO YOU HAS APPARENTLY LIFTED A GREAT WEIGHT FROM HIS SHOULDERS.
THOUGH I'M NO EXPERT ON ATLANTEAN BIOLOGY--
--I'M CONFIDENT HE'LL LIVE THROUGH THE NIGHT.
SEE THAT HE DOES.
MASTER NAMOR-- SHOULD I INFORM THE AVENGERS THAT YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY TO JOIN THEM IN BATTLE ?
MASTER NAMOR ?
YOU'RE THE TEAM'S BUTLER, JARVIS--IS THE SUB-MARINER GOING TO BE OKAY ?
I'M AFRAID THE SCION OF THE SEVEN SEAS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A MYSTERY TO ME, MS. CARTER.
THERE IS SOMEONE HOWEVER--
--A RESERVIST MEMBER EN ROUTE TO THE MANSION AT THIS VERY MOMENT TO AID THE AVENGERS--
--WHO MIGHT BE OF SOME ASSISTANCE TO MASTER NAMOR.
TEP TEP TEP TEP
THAT ANCIENT FOOL!
HE SHOULD BE ENJOYING HIS RETIREMENT FROM HIS SERVICE TO OUR PEOPLE!
INSTEAD HE IS ALMOST KILLED GALLIVANTING ACROSS THE GLOBE AS THE PLANET'S CONSCIENCE!
HE HAS NO RIGHT TO ASK ME TO GET INVOLVED.
MY PLACE IS WITH THE WARRIORS!
NOT--
--NOT WITH THE...VICTIMS OF WAR.
MAY THE TIDE TAKE THEE, OLD MAN!
FWAP
SWAOOSH
IT WAS MY FONDEST WISH TO GO TO MY GRAVE WITHOUT RE-CALLING THE MEMORIES OF... THE LAST WAR!

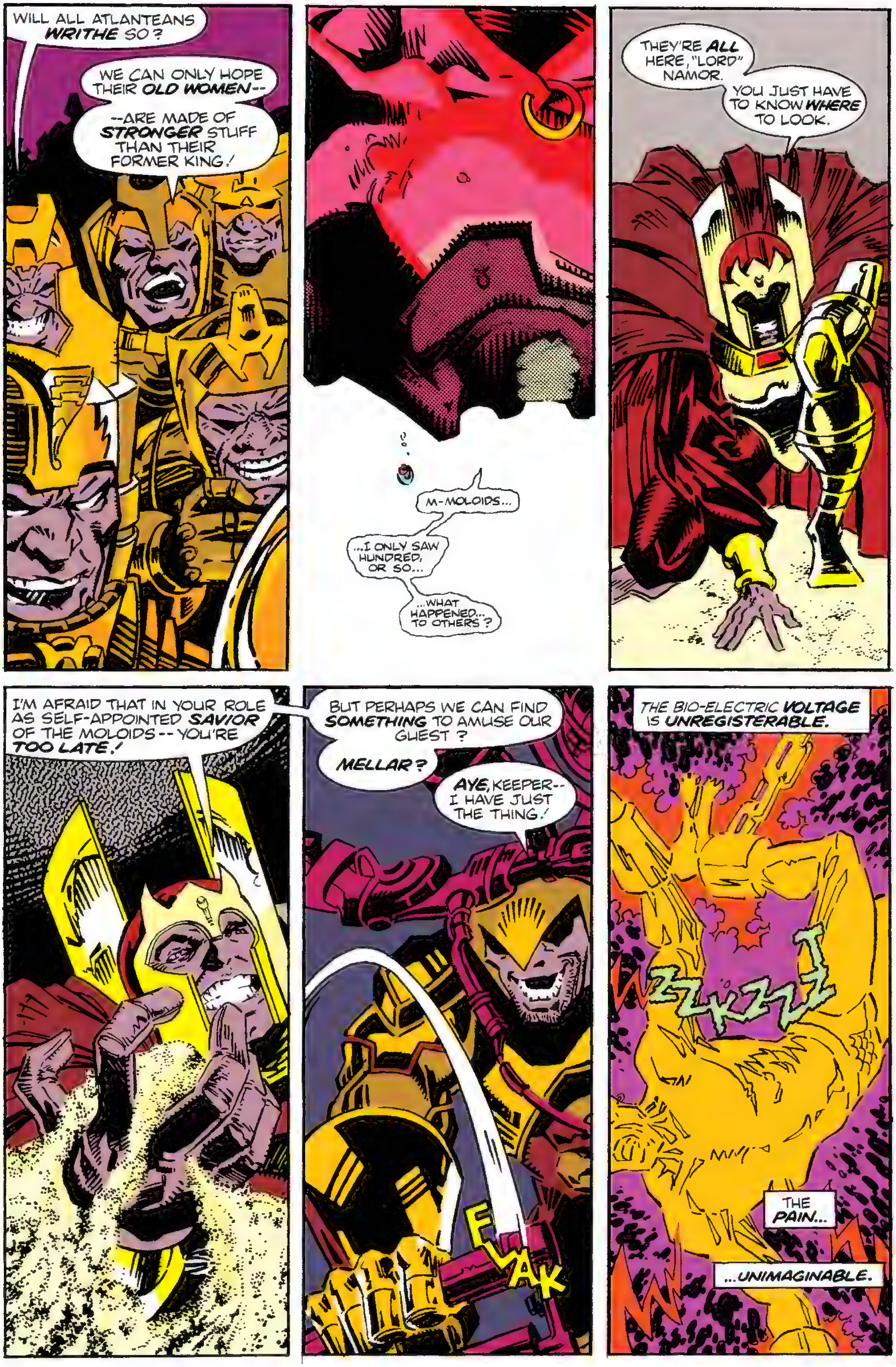

WHOAAAA, THERE, SIR.
TZZZZRAT
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE BATTING THOSE GIANT BOULDERS!
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY SUPER HERO UNDER THE SEA.
GREETINGS, STINGRAY.
I HAVE NO TIME TO TALK.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD MAKE TIME.
JARVIS SAID YOU WERE ACTING STRANGE...
...AND NOW YOU'RE HEADED IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION OF THE SUBTERRANEAN WAR.
I'D FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE IF YOU'D TAKE A MO--
TAP
YOUR DEGREE OF COMFORT IS OF NO CONCERN TO ME, DR. NEWELL.
SLAM
TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.
AND NAMOR EXPLAINS HIMSELF TO NO MAN.

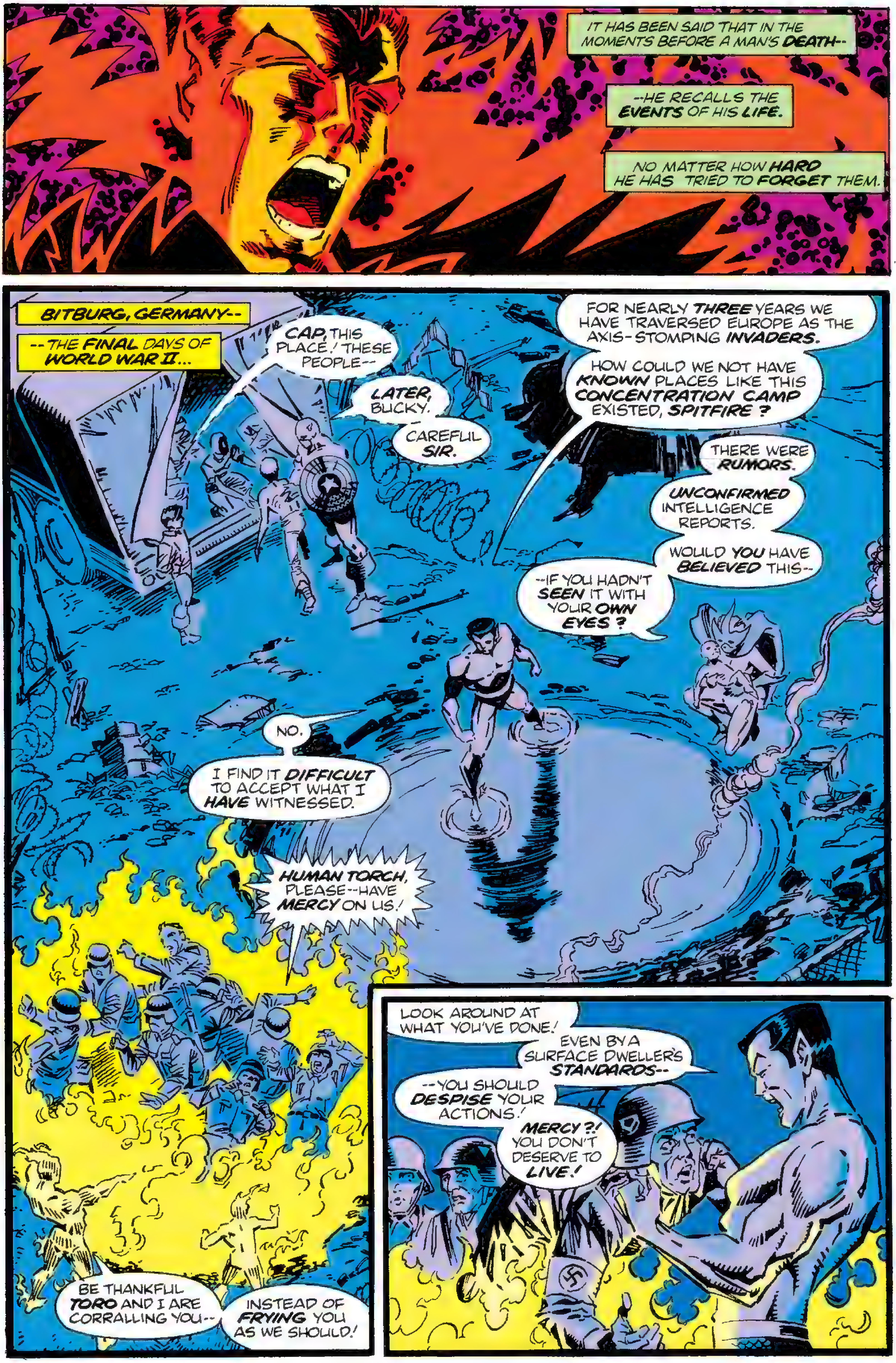

SOME TIME LATER--
--IN THE UNDERWORLD CITY OF **EURASIA**...
SPY HOW WEAK-WILLED ARE THESE **MUTATED** SUBTERRANEANS?
AYE! WE SLAY **TEN-SCORE** UPON THE **HOUR**--
--AND STILL THEIR BRETHREN MARCH **BLINDLY** INTO **THE CHAMBERS**.
THE **KEEPER** IS RIGHT.
IT IS OUR SACRED DUTY TO **CLEANSE** THE **HOLY CAVERNS** OF SUCH AS THESE.
EVEN THE **YOUNGEST** OF THESE PATHETIC CREATURES LIVE TO SERVE.
YOU DID AN **EXCELLENT** JOB OF CLEANING BOOTS, **YOUNG ONE.**
BOK
NOW YOU CAN SEE YOUR **REFLECTION** IN THEM, AS I **SHEAR** THE HEAD FROM YOUR SHO--
SKRA-BOOM
EH?!
THE DOCKING BAY!

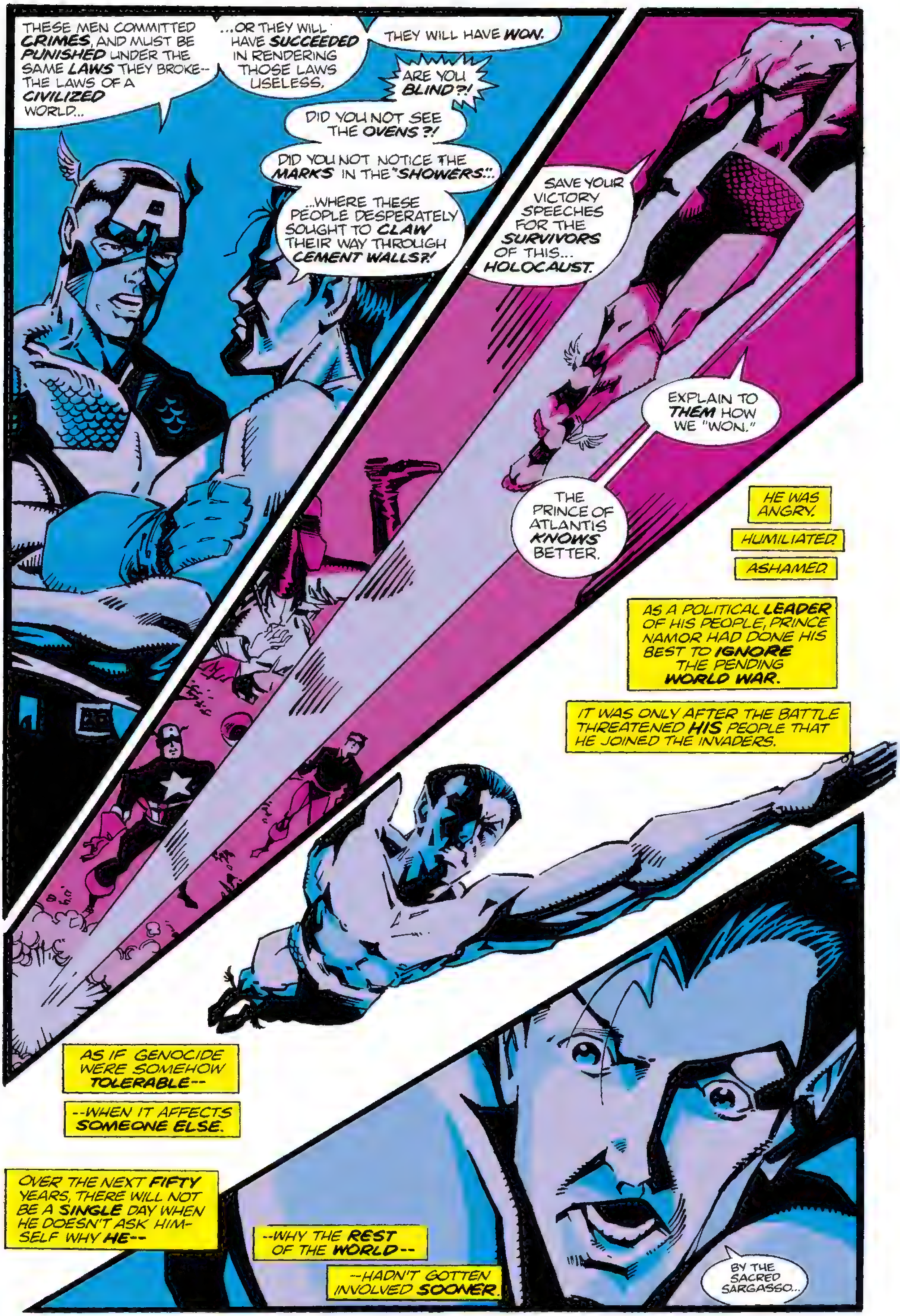

WE'RE UNDER **ATTACK** BUT BY **WHO?!**
IT DOESN'T MATTER, FOOL! THOSE **SHIPS** ARE FILLED WITH OUR **FOOD** AND **SUPPLIES!**
WE'LL BE **TRAPPED** HERE, **STARVING** ADMIDST THE CORPSES OF OUR **VICTIMS!**
FIRST, PUT OUT THOSE **FIRES!**
BARA BOOOM
SK-BOOM
THEN, FIND THE INTRUDER!
THE **EXPLOSIVES** I APPROPRIATED FROM ORACLE INC.--
--ARE QUITE AN EFFECTIVE **DISTRACTION.**
WHILE MOST OF THE DORADIANS TEND TO THE **REMAINS** OF THEIR **FLEET...**
BLAM
...THE MIGHTY SUB-MARINER SHALL ATTEND TO THE REMAINING **GUARDS.**

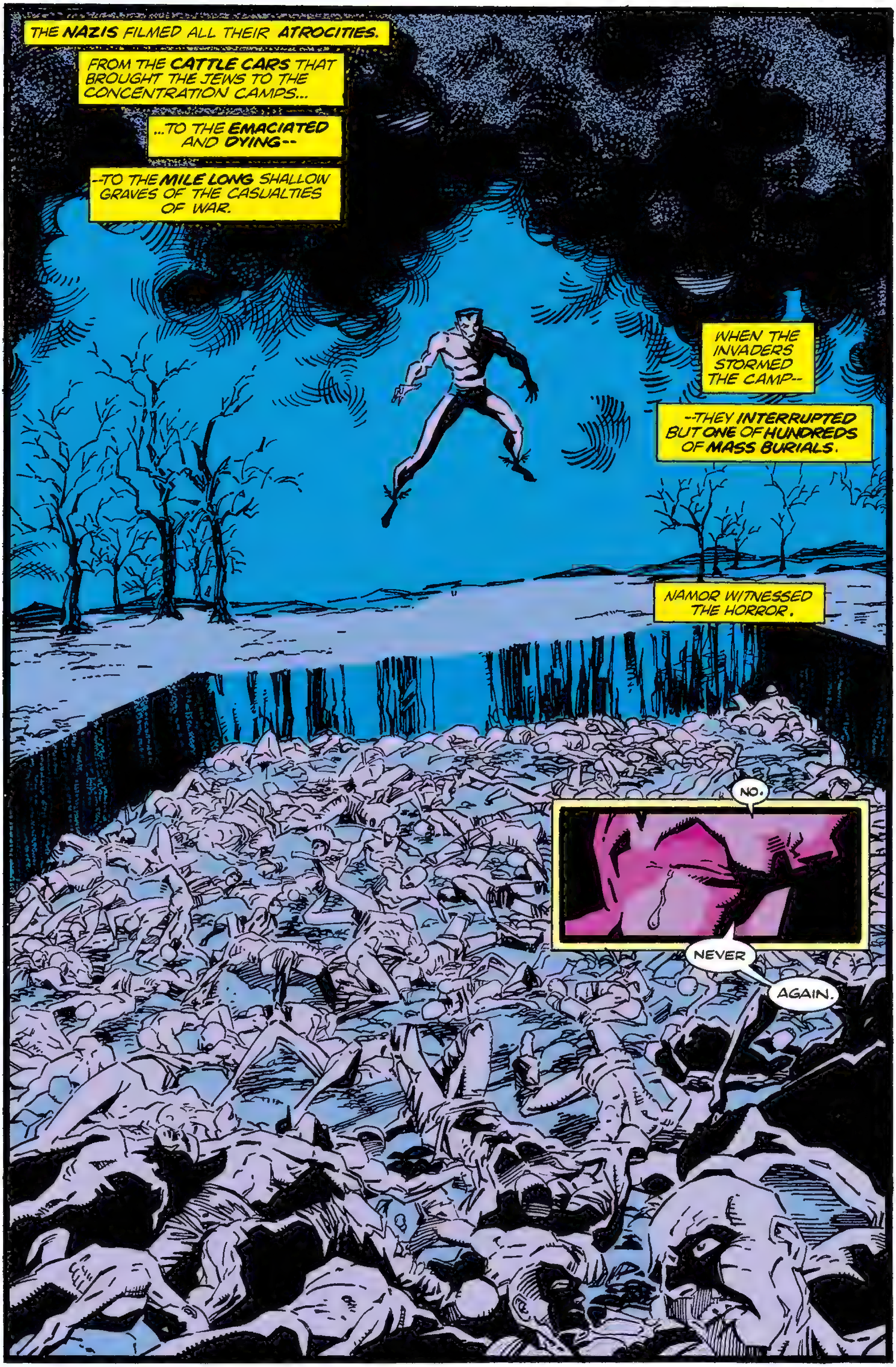

WERE I BUT STILL POSSESSED OF THE ABILITY TO FLY*, I WOULD BE UPON THE MOLOIDS' CELL IN A MOMENT.
*NAMOR LOST HIS ANKLE WINGS IN #8 -T.K.
WREENNT
THOUGH I LONG TO EXACT VENGEANCE UPON THOSE WHO WOULD SEEK TO DESTROY SUCH A PEACEFUL PEOPLE--
--I MUST FIRST SEE TO THE SAFETY OF THE CHILDREN AND THE AGED.
LOOK AT THEM... EXHAUSTED, STARVED, DEHYDRATED.
AND THEIR EYES--THEY ARE AS FRIGHTENED OF ME AS THEY ARE THOSE WHO SEEK TO SLAY THEM.
I AM PRINCE NAMOR OF THE AVENGERS.
YOU ARE FREE TO GO! FLEE INTO THE SIDE CAVERNS WHILE I ENGAGE THE ENEMY!
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND--YOU ARE FREE!
FLEE... BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
BY NEPTUNE, PLEASE.
IT IS ALREADY TOO LATE, INTRUDER!
TRZZT
WHA--?!
MUSTN'T--
--BLACK...
...OUT...

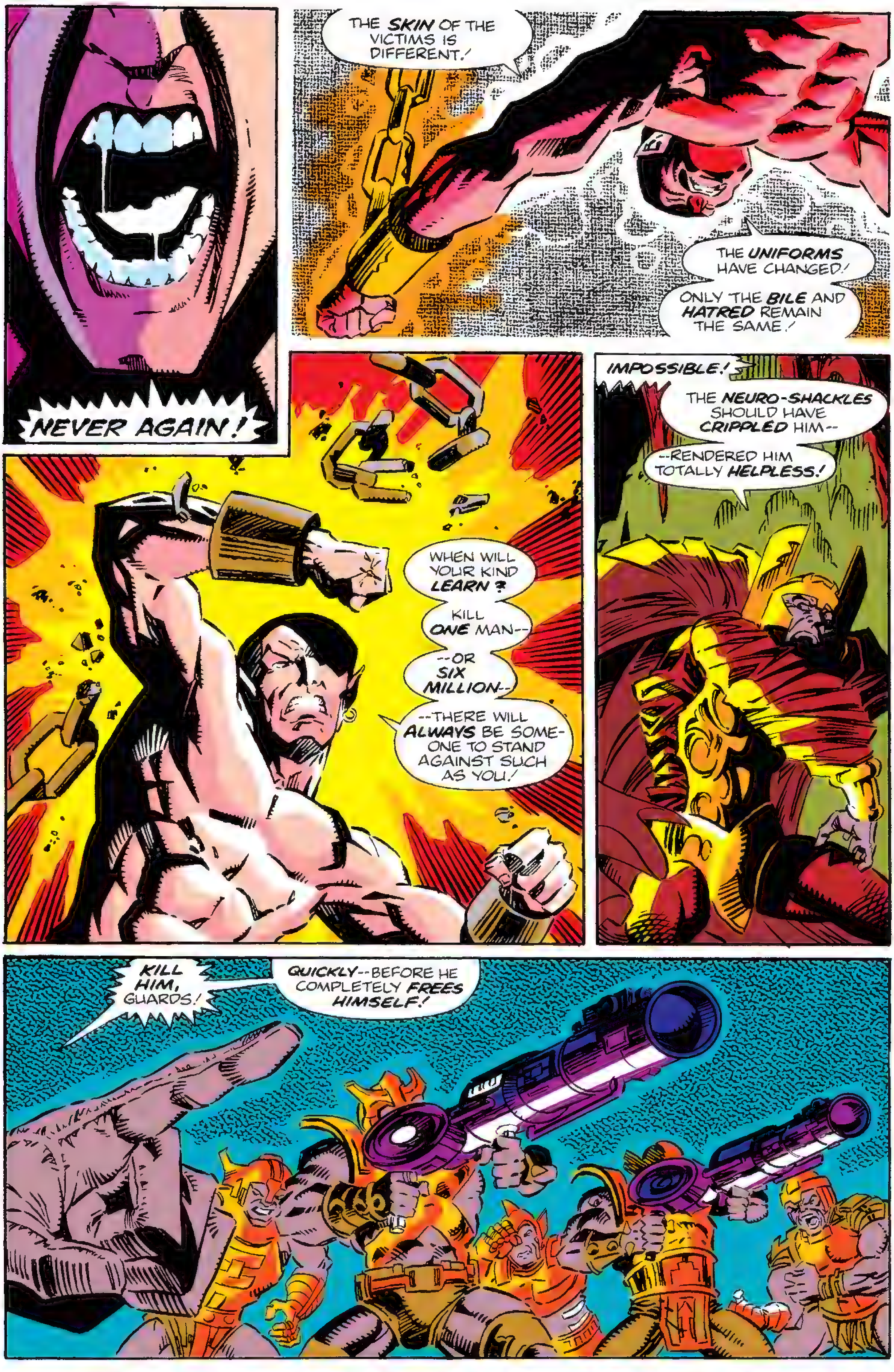

TIME PASSES...
WELCOME BACK TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING, NAMOR...THOUGH I'M AFRAID YOU WON'T BE **HERE** FOR VERY LONG.
ALLOW ME TO ***INTRODUCE*** MYSELF--I AM KNOWN AS ***THE KEEPER OF THE FLAME.*** I AM ***RULER*** OF THE DORADIANS.
THEN YOU ARE A BUTCHER...AND A COWARD.
THE SCION OF THE SEVEN SEAS, REDUCED TO ***NAME CALLING?***
OH, HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN.
CALL US WHAT YOU WILL, UNLIKE THE ***YELLOW-SKINNED*** FREAKS WE'RE ***EXTERMINATING--***
--DORADIANS ARE ***HUMAN BEINGS.***
UNLIKE ANY OTHER SPECIES ***ABOVE*** OR ***BELOW*** THIS PLANET OF OURS...
HUMAN BEINGS ***ENJOY*** INFLICTING ***PAIN*** FOR PAIN'S SAKE.
SEE ?
KRZZRAAKT

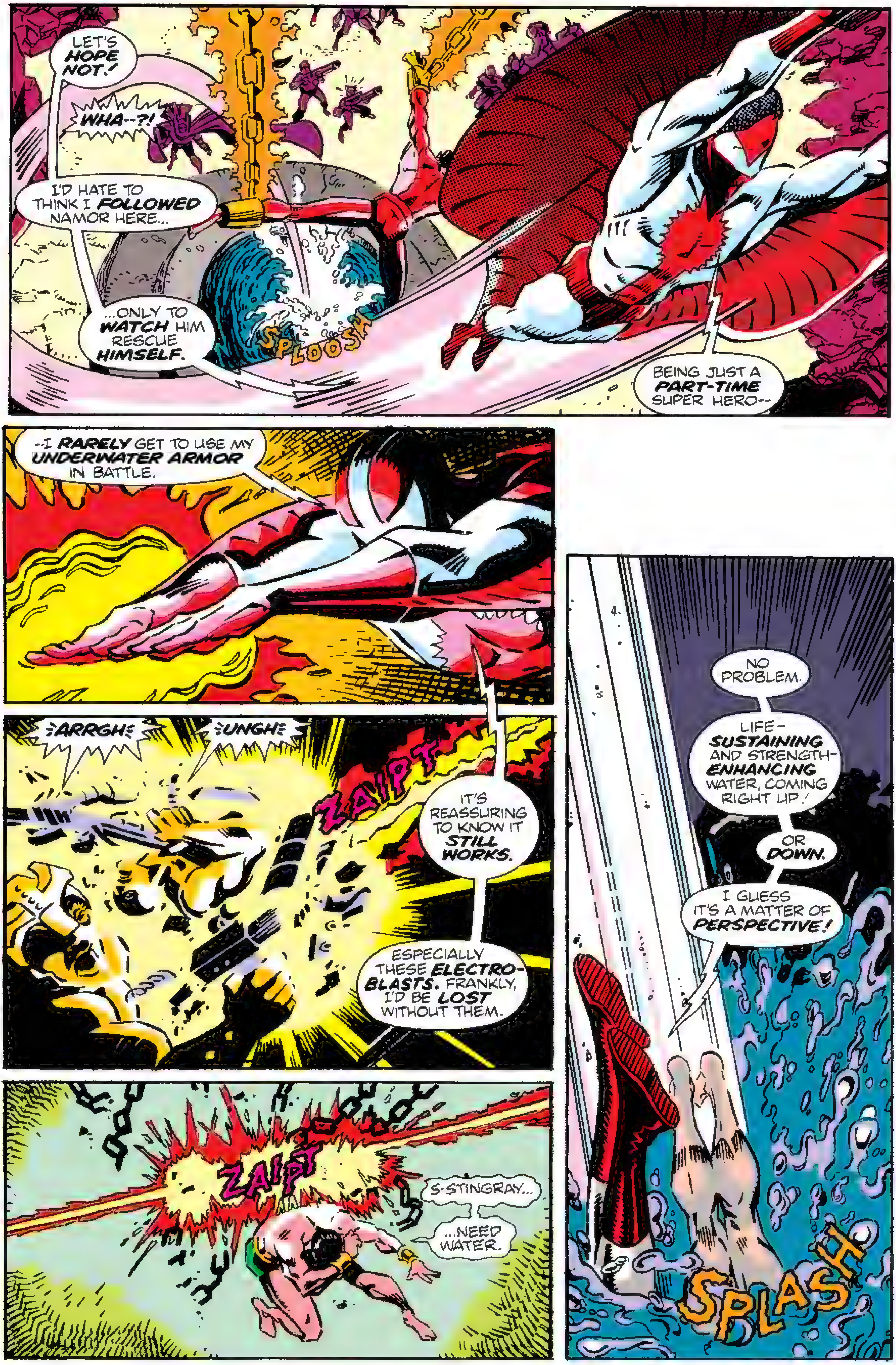

WILL ALL ATLANTEANS WRITHE SO?
WE CAN ONLY HOPE THEIR OLD WOMEN--
--ARE MADE OF STRONGER STUFF THAN THEIR FORMER KING!
M-MOLOIDS...
...I ONLY SAW HUNDRED, OR SO...
...WHAT HAPPENED... TO OTHERS?
THEY'RE ALL HERE, "LORD" NAMOR.
YOU JUST HAVE TO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.
I'M AFRAID THAT IN YOUR ROLE AS SELF-APPOINTED SAVIOR OF THE MOLOIDS -- YOU'RE TOO LATE!
BUT PERHAPS WE CAN FIND SOMETHING TO AMUSE OUR GUEST?
MELLAR?
AYE, KEEPER-- I HAVE JUST THE THING!
FLAK
THE BIO-ELECTRIC VOLTAGE IS UNREGISTERABLE.
ZZKZZT
THE PAIN...
...UNIMAGINABLE.

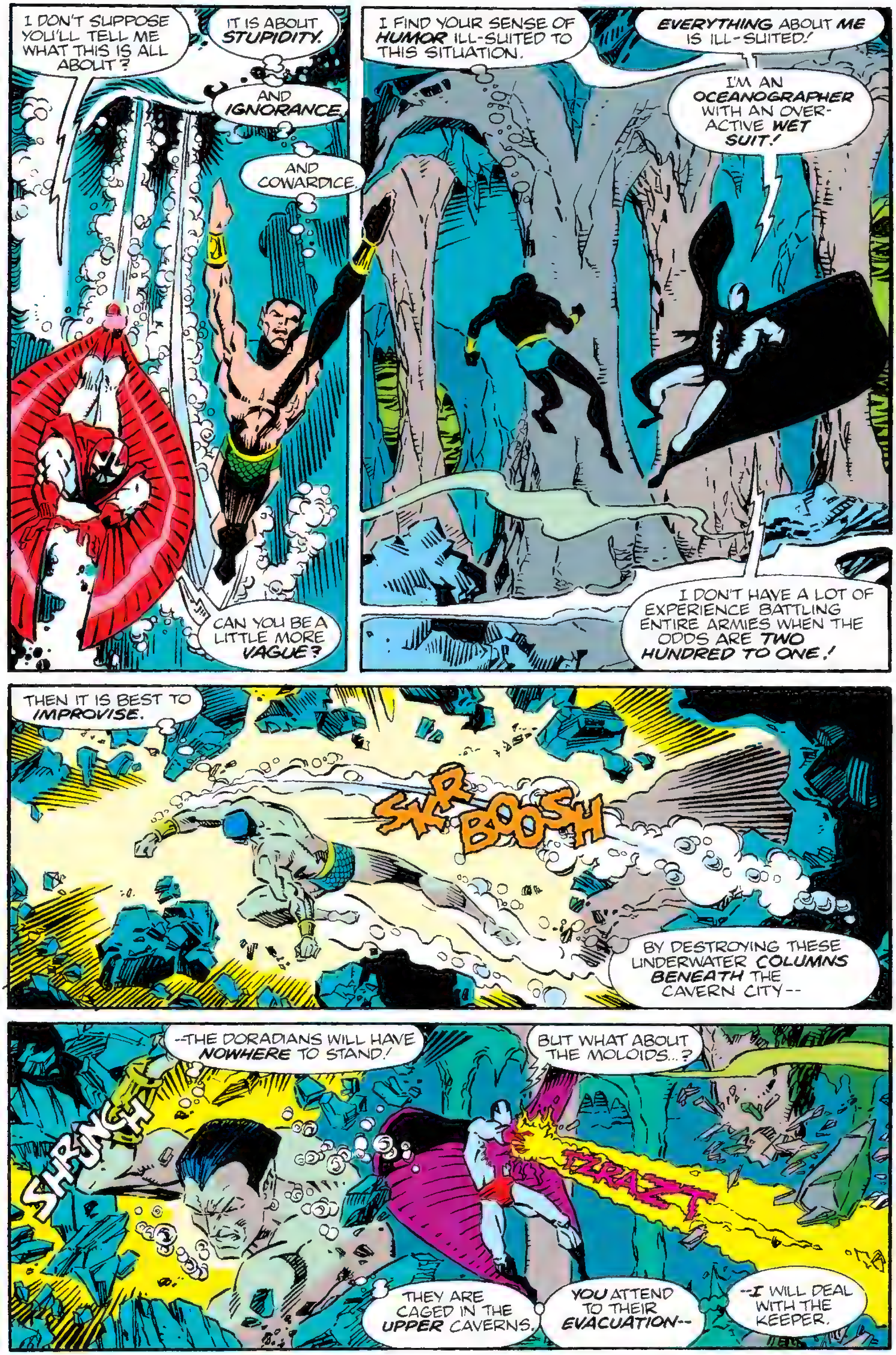

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT IN THE MOMENTS BEFORE A MAN'S **DEATH**--
--HE RECALLS THE **EVENTS** OF HIS **LIFE**.
NO MATTER HOW **HARD** HE HAS TRIED TO **FORGET** THEM.
BITBURG, GERMANY--
--THE **FINAL** DAYS OF **WORLD WAR II**...
CAP, THIS PLACE! THESE PEOPLE--
LATER, BUCKY.
CAREFUL **SIR.**
FOR NEARLY **THREE** YEARS WE HAVE TRAVERSED EUROPE AS THE AXIS-STOMPING **INVADERS.**
HOW COULD WE NOT HAVE **KNOWN** PLACES LIKE THIS **CONCENTRATION CAMP** EXISTED, **SPITFIRE ?**
THERE WERE **RUMORS.**
UNCONFIRMED INTELLIGENCE REPORTS.
WOULD **YOU** HAVE **BELIEVED** THIS--
--IF YOU HADN'T **SEEN** IT WITH YOUR **OWN EYES ?**
NO.
I FIND IT **DIFFICULT** TO ACCEPT WHAT I **HAVE** WITNESSED.
HUMAN TORCH, PLEASE--HAVE **MERCY** ON US!
BE THANKFUL **TORO** AND I ARE CORRALLING YOU--
INSTEAD OF **FRYING** YOU AS WE SHOULD!
LOOK AROUND AT WHAT YOU'VE DONE!
EVEN BY A SURFACE DWELLER'S **STANDARDS**--
--YOU SHOULD **DESPISE** YOUR ACTIONS!
MERCY ?! YOU DON'T DESERVE TO **LIVE!**

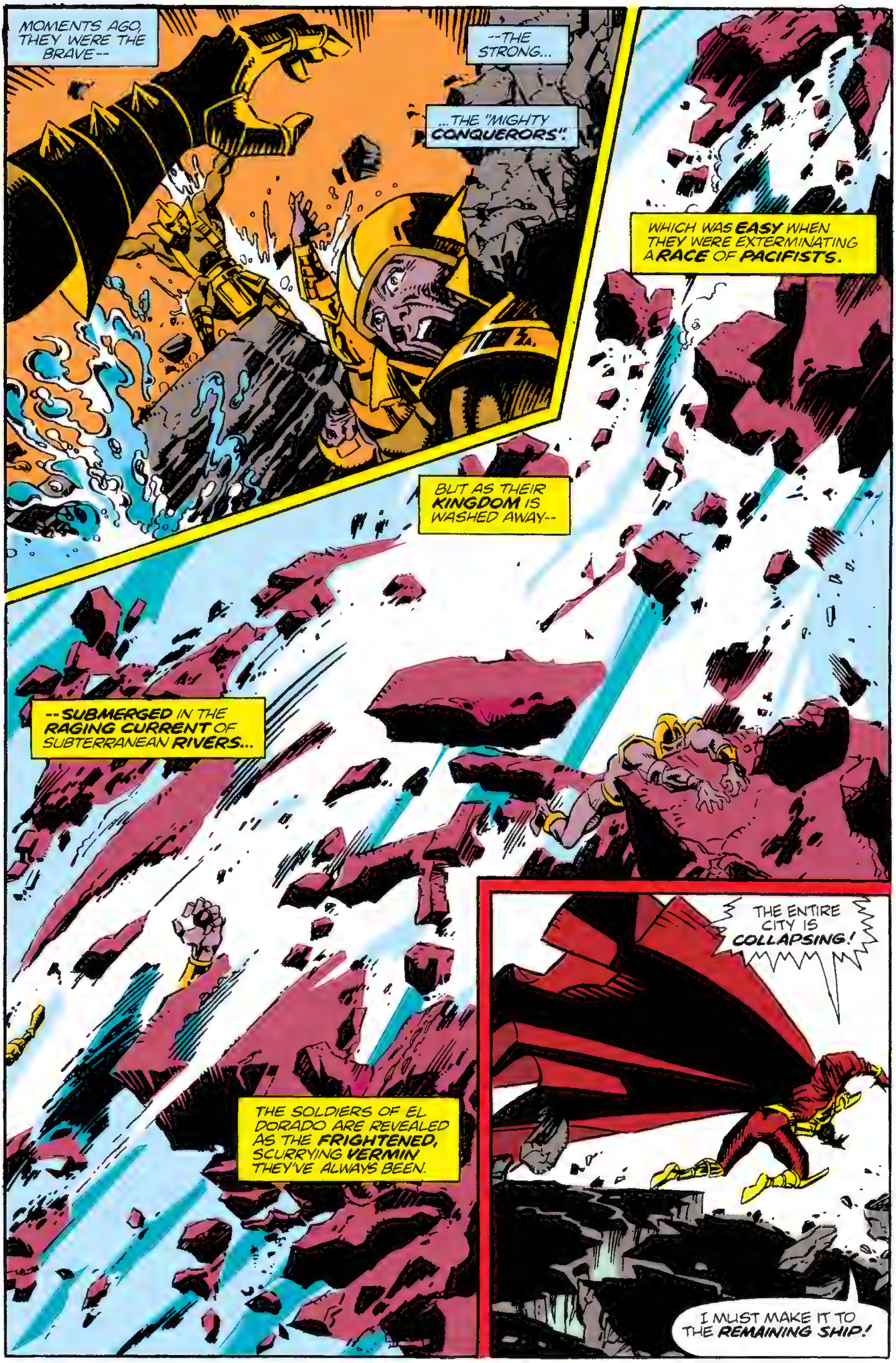

THESE MEN COMMITTED CRIMES, AND MUST BE PUNISHED UNDER THE SAME LAWS THEY BROKE-- THE LAWS OF A CIVILIZED WORLD...
...OR THEY WILL HAVE SUCCEEDED IN RENDERING THOSE LAWS USELESS.
THEY WILL HAVE WON.
ARE YOU BLIND?!
DID YOU NOT SEE THE OVENS?!
DID YOU NOT NOTICE THE MARKS IN THE "SHOWERS"...
...WHERE THESE PEOPLE DESPERATELY SOUGHT TO CLAW THEIR WAY THROUGH CEMENT WALLS?!
SAVE YOUR VICTORY SPEECHES FOR THE SURVIVORS OF THIS... HOLOCAUST.
EXPLAIN TO THEM HOW WE "WON."
THE PRINCE OF ATLANTIS KNOWS BETTER.
HE WAS ANGRY.
HUMILIATED.
ASHAMED.
AS A POLITICAL LEADER OF HIS PEOPLE, PRINCE NAMOR HAD DONE HIS BEST TO IGNORE THE PENDING WORLD WAR.
IT WAS ONLY AFTER THE BATTLE THREATENED HIS PEOPLE THAT HE JOINED THE INVADERS.
AS IF GENOCIDE WERE SOMEHOW TOLERABLE--
--WHEN IT AFFECTS SOMEONE ELSE.
OVER THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS, THERE WILL NOT BE A SINGLE DAY WHEN HE DOESN'T ASK HIMSELF WHY HE--
--WHY THE REST OF THE WORLD--
--HADN'T GOTTEN INVOLVED SOONER.
BY THE SACRED SARGASSO...

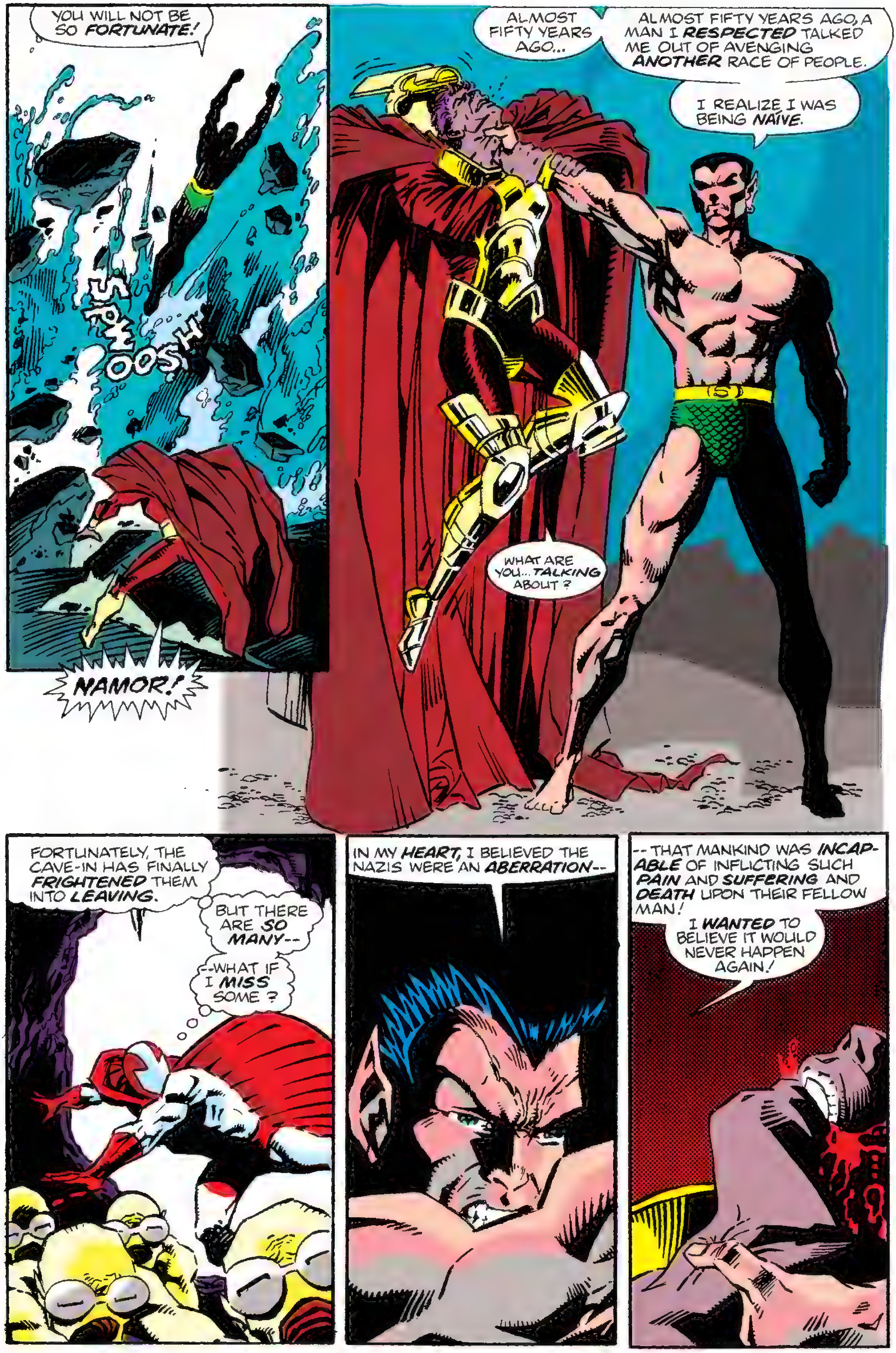

THE NAZIS FILMED ALL THEIR ATROCITIES.
FROM THE CATTLE CARS THAT BROUGHT THE JEWS TO THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS...
...TO THE EMACIATED AND DYING--
--TO THE MILE LONG SHALLOW GRAVES OF THE CASUALTIES OF WAR.
WHEN THE INVADERS STORMED THE CAMP--
--THEY INTERRUPTED BUT ONE OF HUNDREDS OF MASS BURIALS.
NAMOR WITNESSED THE HORROR.
NO.
NEVER
AGAIN.

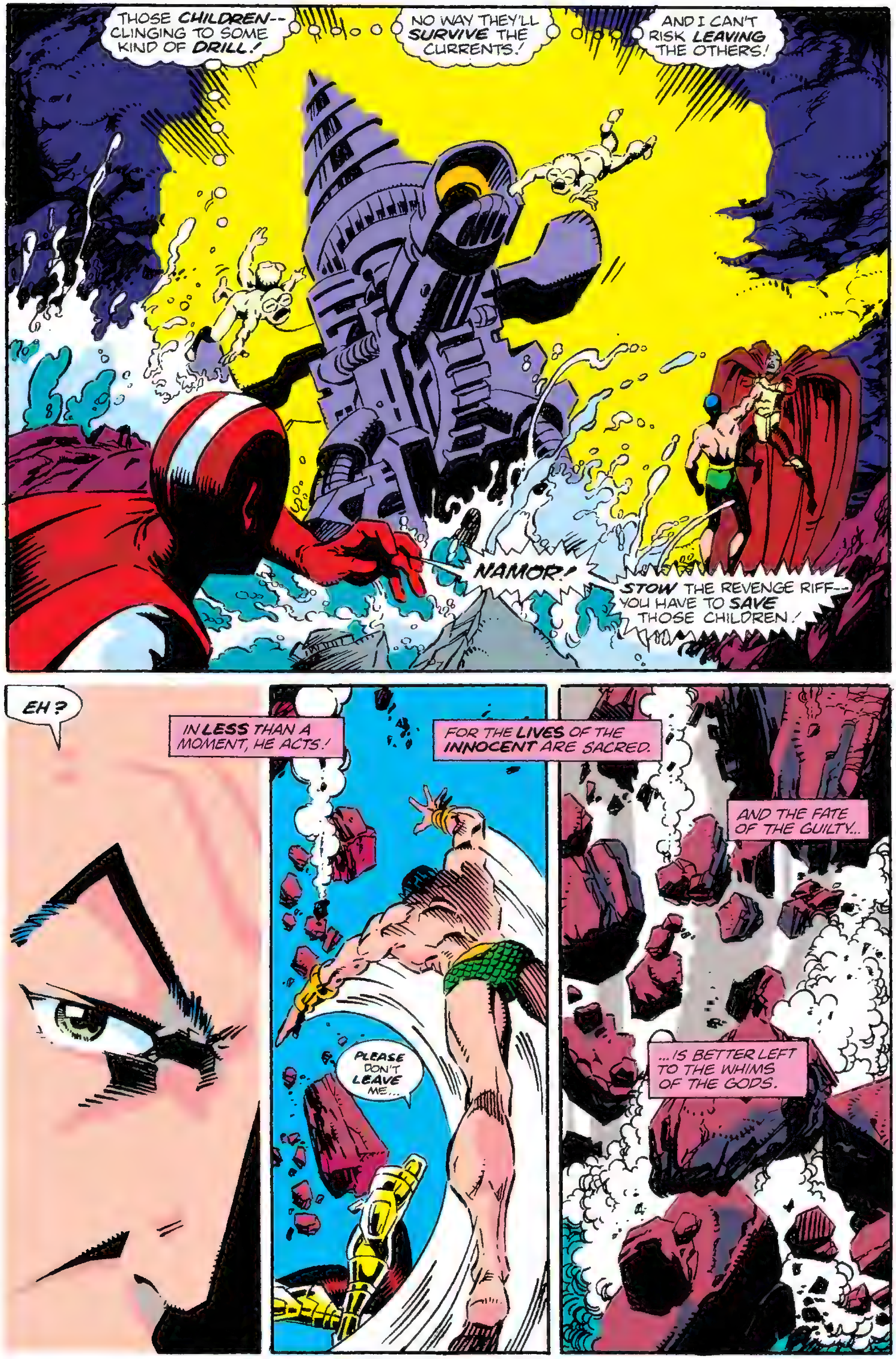

NEVER AGAIN!
THE SKIN OF THE VICTIMS IS DIFFERENT!
THE UNIFORMS HAVE CHANGED!
ONLY THE BILE AND HATRED REMAIN THE SAME!
WHEN WILL YOUR KIND LEARN?
KILL ONE MAN--
--OR SIX MILLION--
--THERE WILL ALWAYS BE SOMEONE TO STAND AGAINST SUCH AS YOU!
IMPOSSIBLE!
THE NEURO-SHACKLES SHOULD HAVE CRIPPLED HIM--
--RENDERED HIM TOTALLY HELPLESS!
KILL HIM, GUARDS!
QUICKLY--BEFORE HE COMPLETELY FREES HIMSELF!

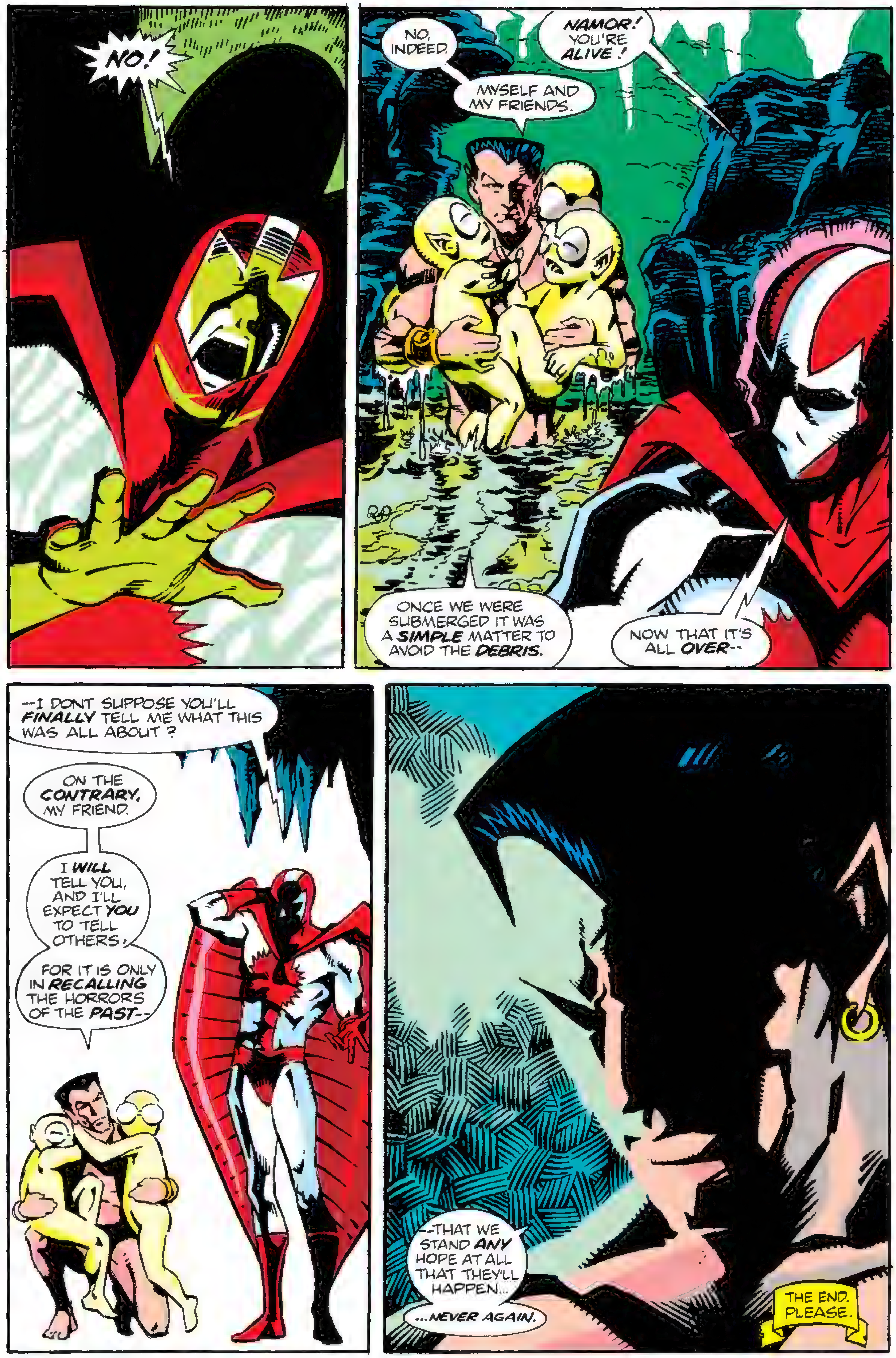

LET'S **HOPE NOT!**
WHA--?!
I'D HATE TO THINK I **FOLLOWED** NAMOR HERE...
...ONLY TO **WATCH** HIM RESCUE **HIMSELF.**
SPLOOSH
BEING JUST A **PART-TIME** SUPER HERO--
--I **RARELY** GET TO USE MY **UNDERWATER ARMOR** IN BATTLE.
ARRGH
UNGH
ZAIPT
IT'S REASSURING TO KNOW IT **STILL WORKS.**
ESPECIALLY THESE **ELECTRO-BLASTS.** FRANKLY, I'D BE **LOST** WITHOUT THEM.
ZAIPT
S-STINGRAY...
...NEED WATER.
NO PROBLEM.
LIFE-**SUSTAINING** AND STRENGTH-**ENHANCING** WATER, COMING RIGHT UP!
OR **DOWN.**
I GUESS IT'S A MATTER OF **PERSPECTIVE!**
SPLASH


I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'LL TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT?
IT IS ABOUT STUPIDITY.
AND IGNORANCE.
AND COWARDICE.
CAN YOU BE A LITTLE MORE VAGUE?
I FIND YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR ILL-SUITED TO THIS SITUATION.
EVERYTHING ABOUT ME IS ILL-SUITED!
I'M AN OCEANOGRAPHER WITH AN OVER-ACTIVE WET SUIT!
I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF EXPERIENCE BATTLING ENTIRE ARMIES WHEN THE ODDS ARE TWO HUNDRED TO ONE!
THEN IT IS BEST TO IMPROVISE.
SKRBOOSH
BY DESTROYING THESE UNDERWATER COLUMNS BENEATH THE CAVERN CITY--
--THE DORADIANS WILL HAVE NOWHERE TO STAND!
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MOLOIDS...?
SHRUNCH
TZRAZT
THEY ARE CAGED IN THE UPPER CAVERNS.
YOU ATTEND TO THEIR EVACUATION--
--I WILL DEAL WITH THE KEEPER.


MOMENTS AGO, THEY WERE THE BRAVE--
--THE STRONG...
...THE "MIGHTY CONQUERORS".
WHICH WAS EASY WHEN THEY WERE EXTERMINATING A RACE OF PACIFISTS.
BUT AS THEIR KINGDOM IS WASHED AWAY--
--SUBMERGED IN THE RAGING CURRENT OF SUBTERRANEAN RIVERS...
THE SOLDIERS OF EL DORADO ARE REVEALED AS THE FRIGHTENED, SCURRYING VERMIN THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN.
THE ENTIRE CITY IS COLLAPSING!
I MUST MAKE IT TO THE REMAINING SHIP!

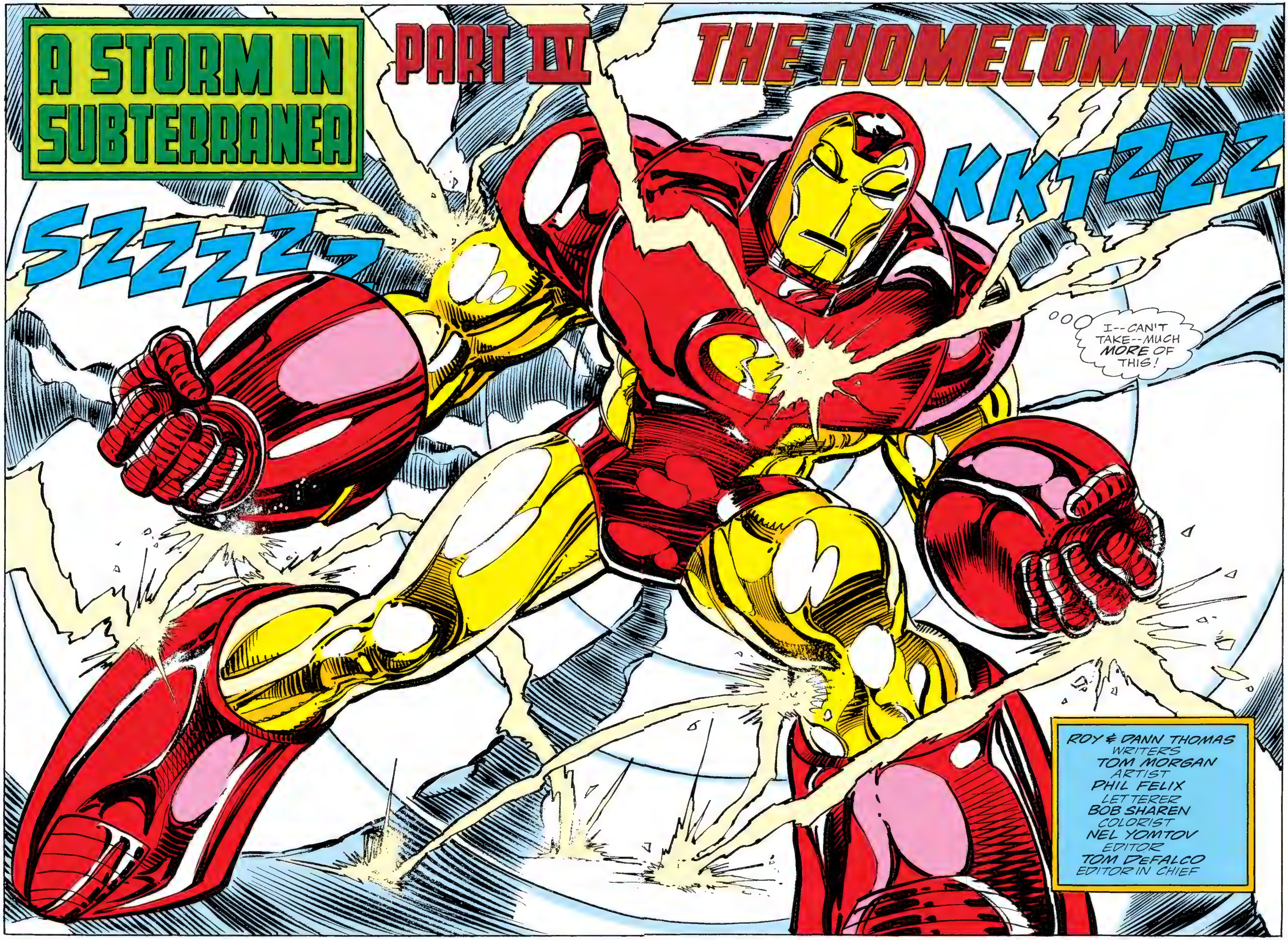

YOU WILL NOT BE SO *FORTUNATE!*
SPWOOSH
NAMOR!
ALMOST FIFTY YEARS AGO...
ALMOST FIFTY YEARS AGO, A MAN I *RESPECTED* TALKED ME OUT OF AVENGING *ANOTHER* RACE OF PEOPLE.
I REALIZE I WAS BEING *NAÏVE.*
WHAT ARE YOU... *TALKING* ABOUT?
FORTUNATELY, THE CAVE-IN HAS FINALLY *FRIGHTENED* THEM INTO *LEAVING.*
BUT THERE ARE *SO MANY--*
--WHAT IF I *MISS* SOME?
IN MY *HEART,* I BELIEVED THE NAZIS WERE AN *ABERRATION--*
--THAT MANKIND WAS *INCAPABLE* OF INFLICTING SUCH *PAIN* AND *SUFFERING* AND *DEATH* UPON THEIR FELLOW MAN!
I *WANTED* TO BELIEVE IT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN!


THOSE CHILDREN-- CLINGING TO SOME KIND OF DRILL!
NO WAY THEY'LL SURVIVE THE CURRENTS!
AND I CAN'T RISK LEAVING THE OTHERS!
NAMOR!
STOW THE REVENGE RIFF-- YOU HAVE TO SAVE THOSE CHILDREN!
EH?
IN LESS THAN A MOMENT, HE ACTS!
FOR THE LIVES OF THE INNOCENT ARE SACRED.
PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME...
AND THE FATE OF THE GUILTY...
...IS BETTER LEFT TO THE WHIMS OF THE GODS.

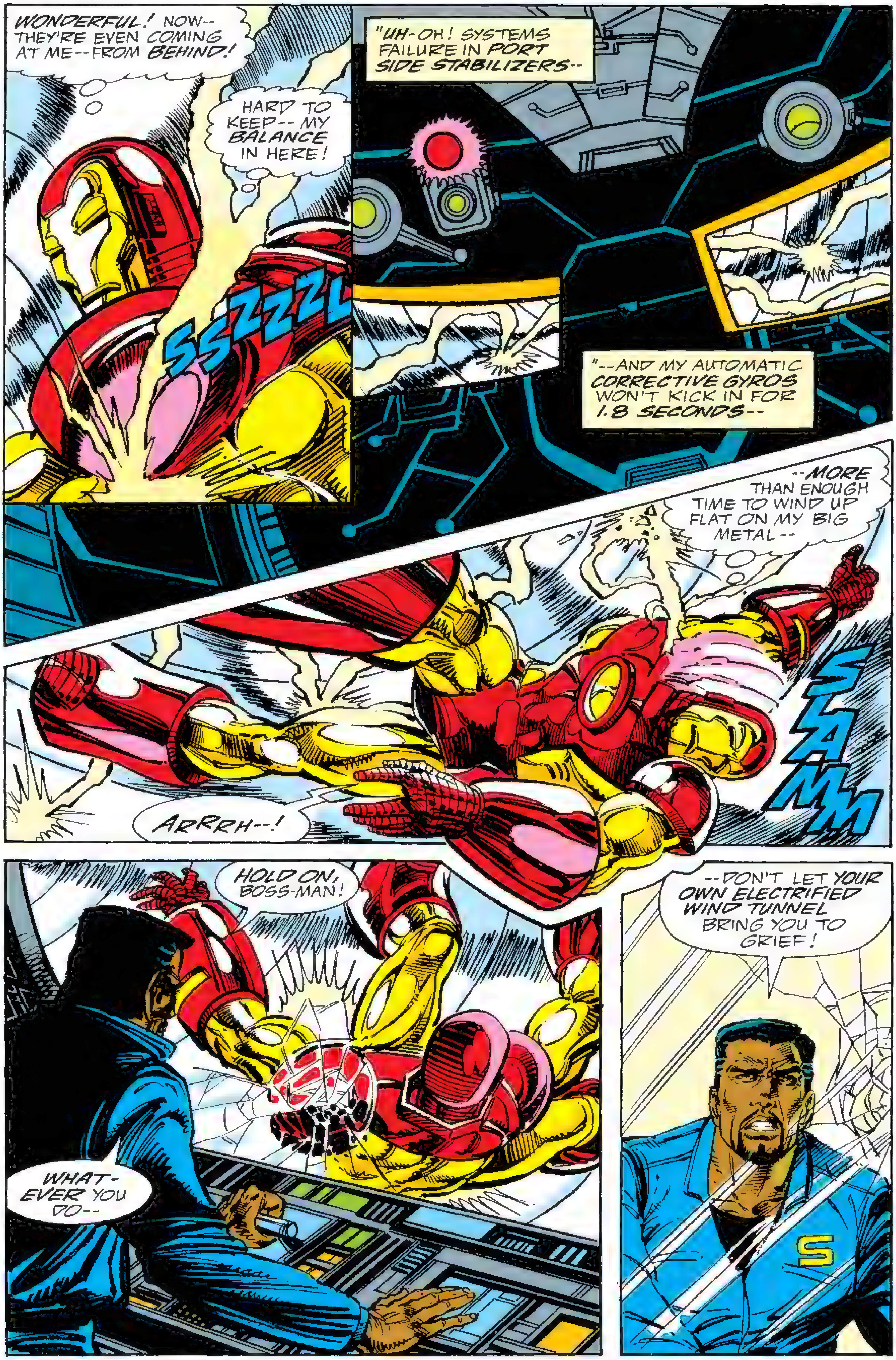

NO!
NAMOR! YOU'RE ALIVE!
NO, INDEED.
MYSELF AND MY FRIENDS.
ONCE WE WERE SUBMERGED IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER TO AVOID THE DEBRIS.
NOW THAT IT'S ALL OVER--
--I DONT SUPPOSE YOU'LL FINALLY TELL ME WHAT THIS WAS ALL ABOUT?
ON THE CONTRARY, MY FRIEND.
I WILL TELL YOU, AND I'LL EXPECT YOU TO TELL OTHERS,
FOR IT IS ONLY IN RECALLING THE HORRORS OF THE PAST--
--THAT WE STAND ANY HOPE AT ALL THAT THEY'LL HAPPEN...
...NEVER AGAIN.
THE END. PLEASE.

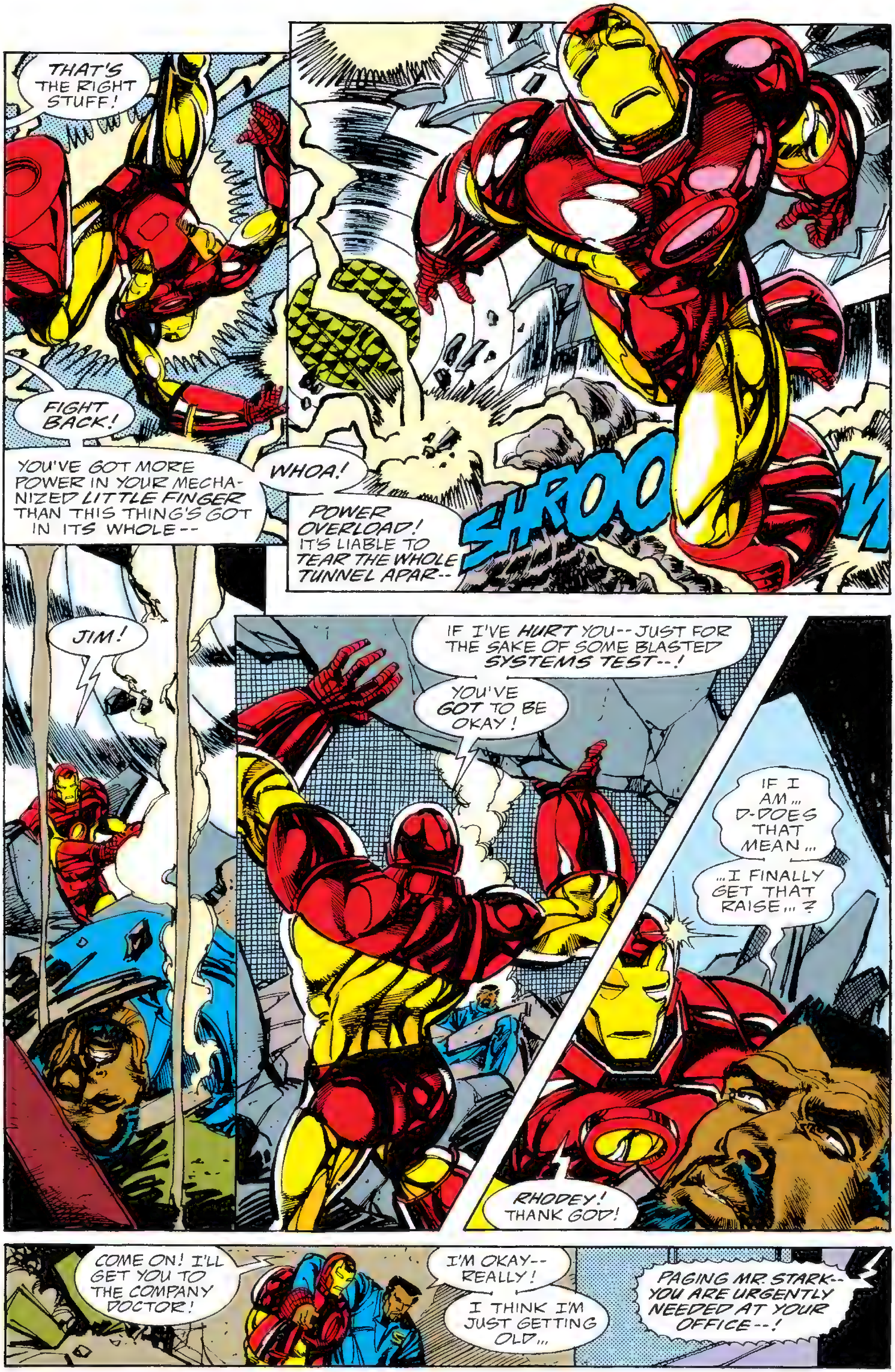
MARVEL® COMICS
ANNUAL
PART 4
SUBTERRANEAN WARS™
64 PAGES
$2.00/ $2.45 CAN.
IRON MAN
12♦1991
02643
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IRON MAN®
TOE-TO-TOE-FURY
AGAINST
THE OUTCASTS!™
MORGAN 4-91

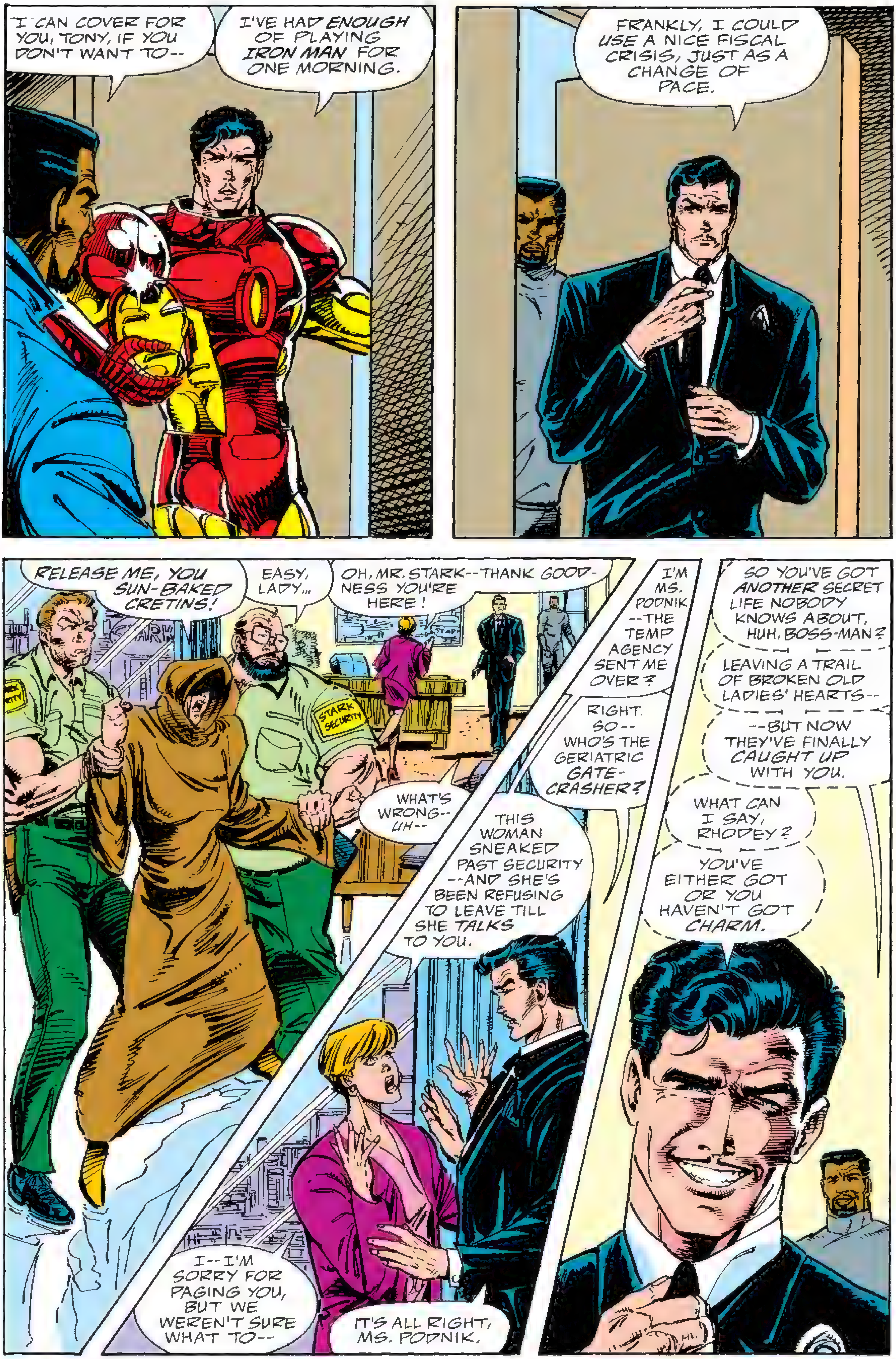
A STORM IN SUBTERRANEA PART IV THE HOMECOMING

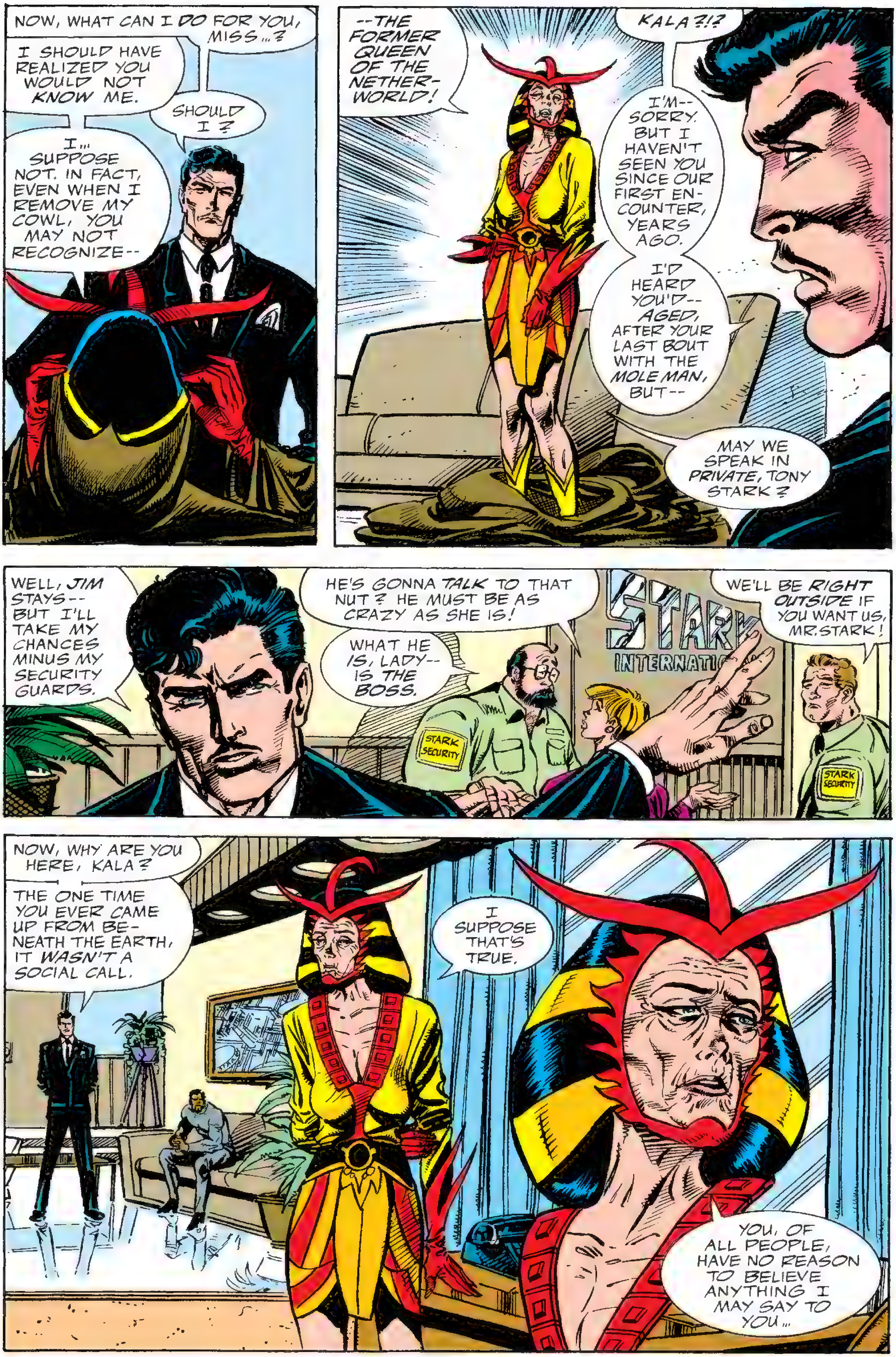

SZZZZZ
KKTZZZ
I--CAN'T TAKE--MUCH *MORE* OF THIS!

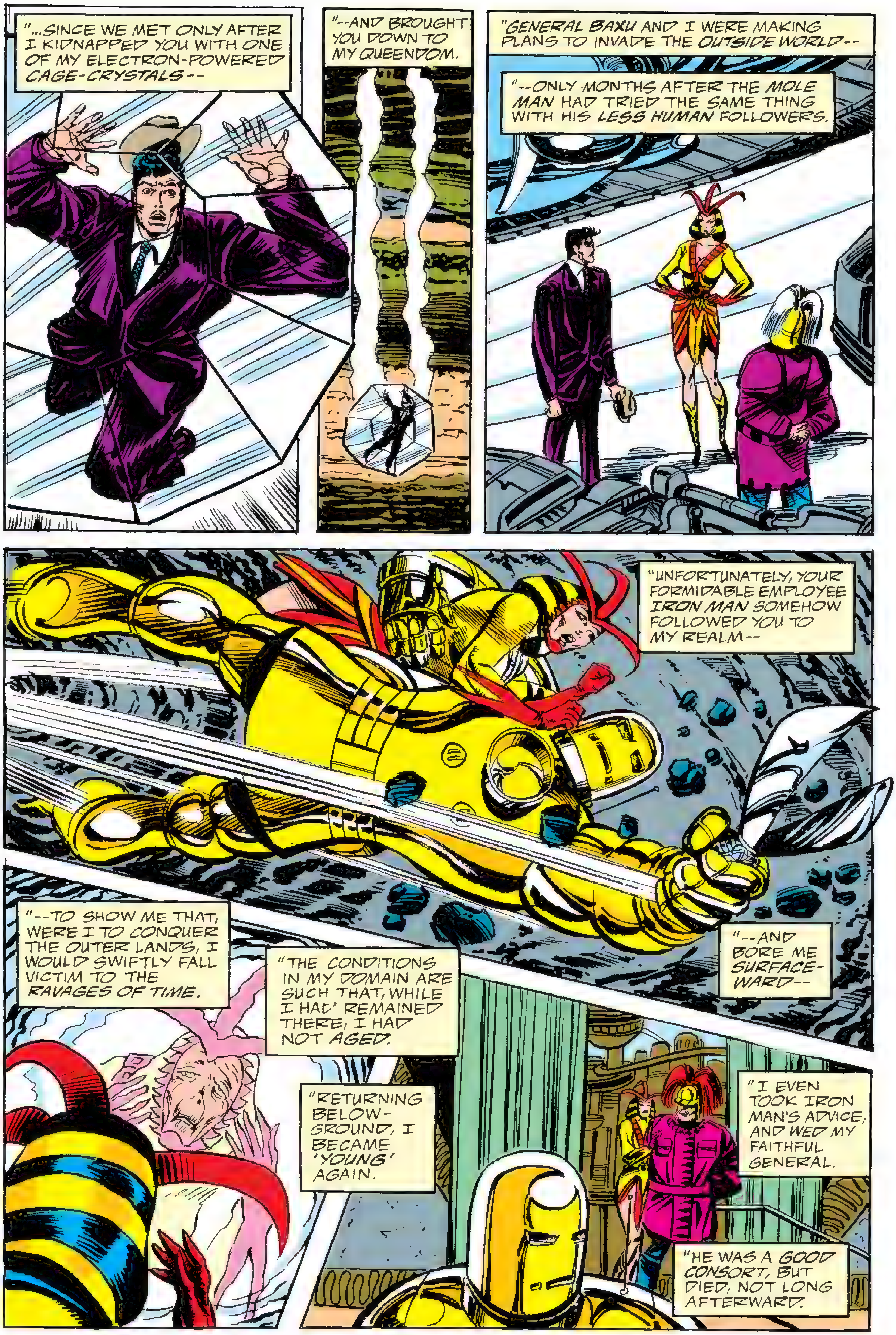
ROY & DANN THOMAS
WRITERS
TOM MORGAN
ARTIST
PHIL FELIX
LETTERER
BOB SHAREN
COLORIST
NEL YOMTOV
EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

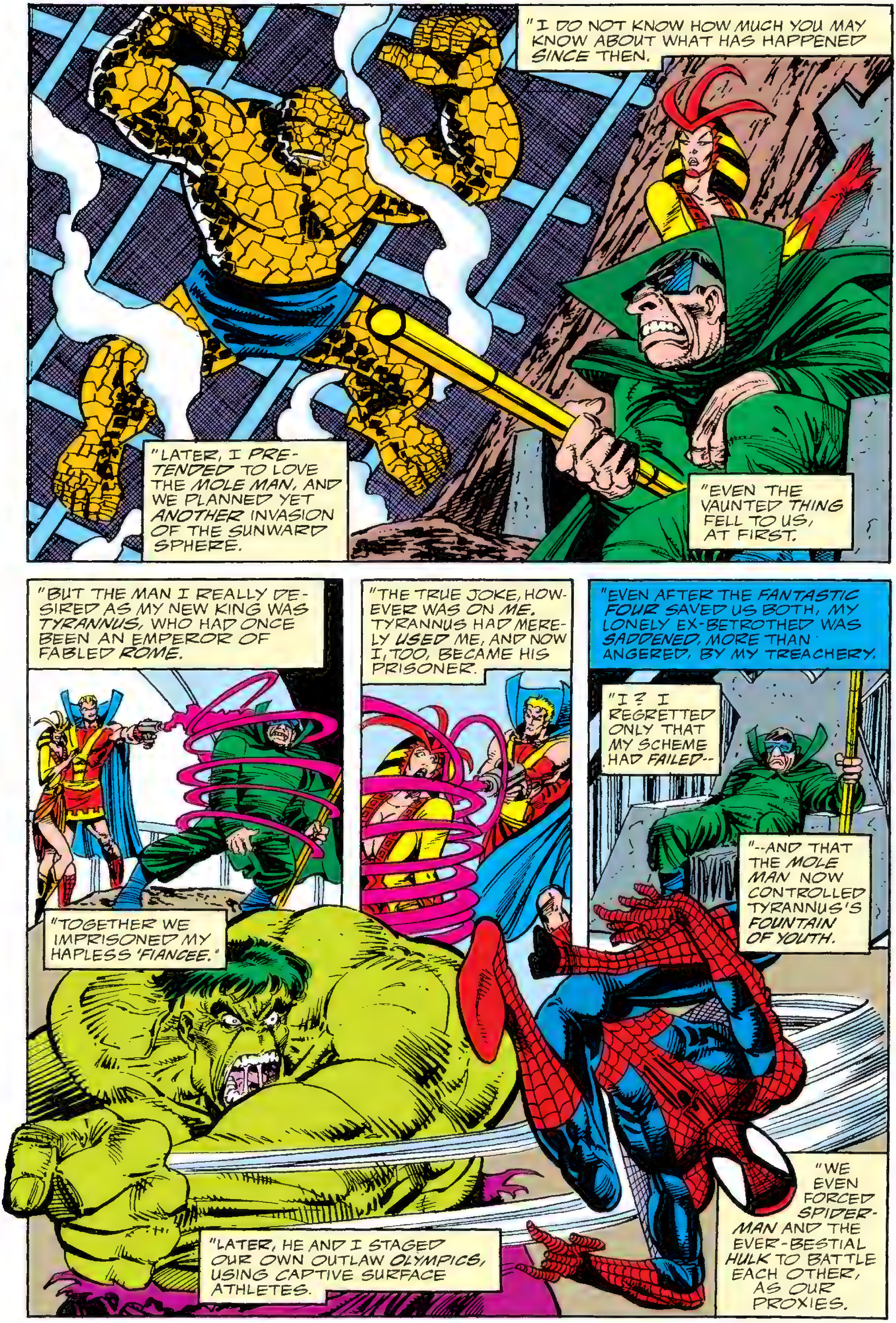

WONDERFUL! NOW-- THEY'RE EVEN COMING AT ME--FROM BEHIND!
HARD TO KEEP-- MY BALANCE IN HERE!
SSZZZZL
"UH-OH! SYSTEMS FAILURE IN PORT SIDE STABILIZERS--
"--AND MY AUTOMATIC CORRECTIVE GYROS WON'T KICK IN FOR 1.8 SECONDS--
--MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME TO WIND UP FLAT ON MY BIG METAL--
SLAMM
ARRRH--!
HOLD ON, BOSS-MAN!
WHAT-EVER YOU DO--
--DON'T LET YOUR OWN ELECTRIFIED WIND TUNNEL BRING YOU TO GRIEF!
S

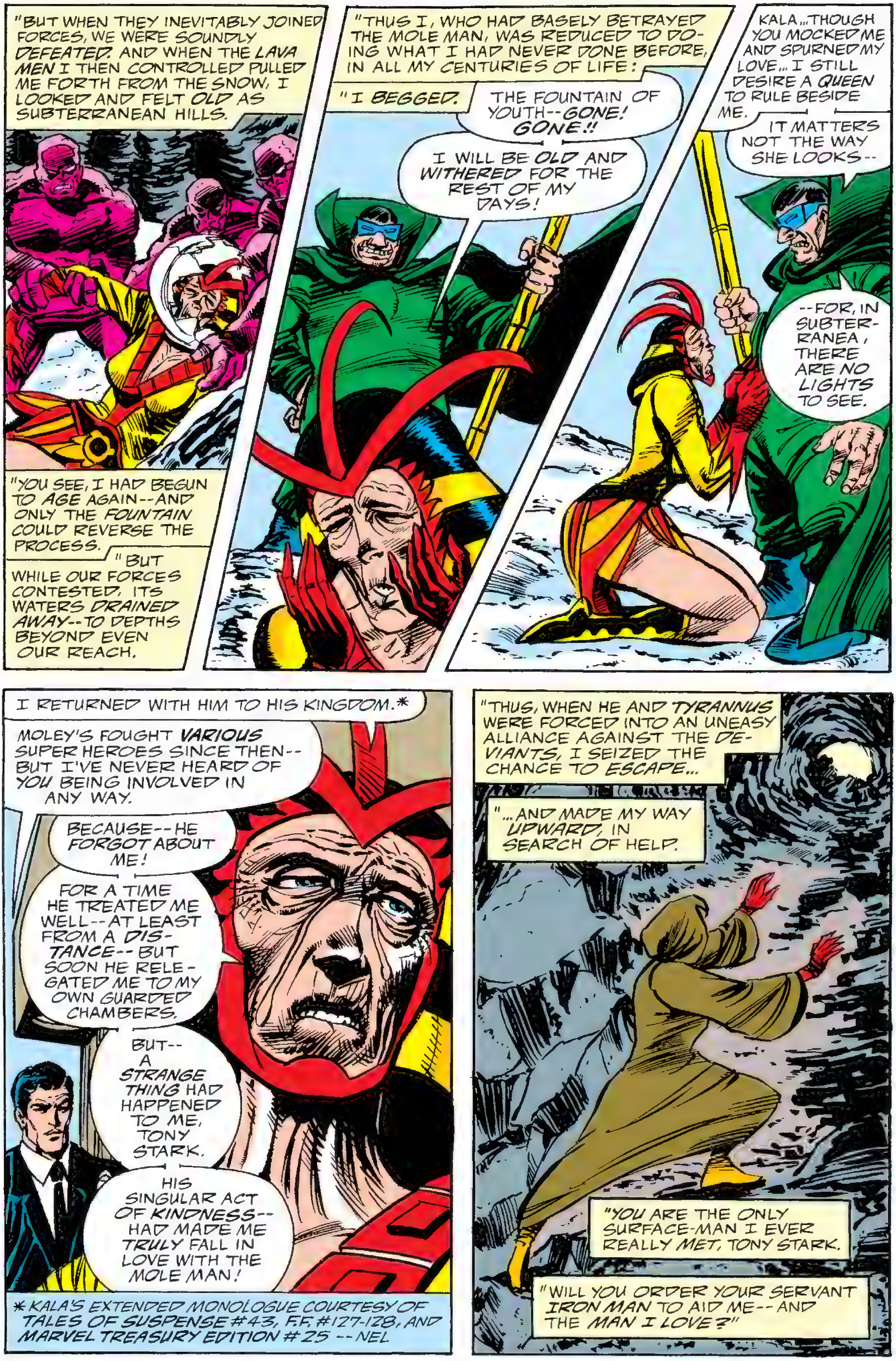

THAT'S THE RIGHT STUFF!
FIGHT BACK!
YOU'VE GOT MORE POWER IN YOUR MECHANIZED *LITTLE FINGER* THAN THIS THING'S GOT IN ITS WHOLE--
WHOA!
POWER OVERLOAD! IT'S LIABLE TO TEAR THE WHOLE TUNNEL APAR--
SHROOM
JIM!
IF I'VE *HURT* YOU-- JUST FOR THE SAKE OF SOME BLASTED *SYSTEMS TEST*--!
YOU'VE *GOT* TO BE OKAY!
IF I AM... D-DOES THAT MEAN...
...I FINALLY GET THAT RAISE...?
RHODEY! THANK GOD!
COME ON! I'LL GET YOU TO THE COMPANY DOCTOR!
I'M OKAY-- REALLY!
I THINK I'M JUST GETTING OLD...
PAGING MR. STARK-- YOU ARE URGENTLY NEEDED AT YOUR OFFICE--!

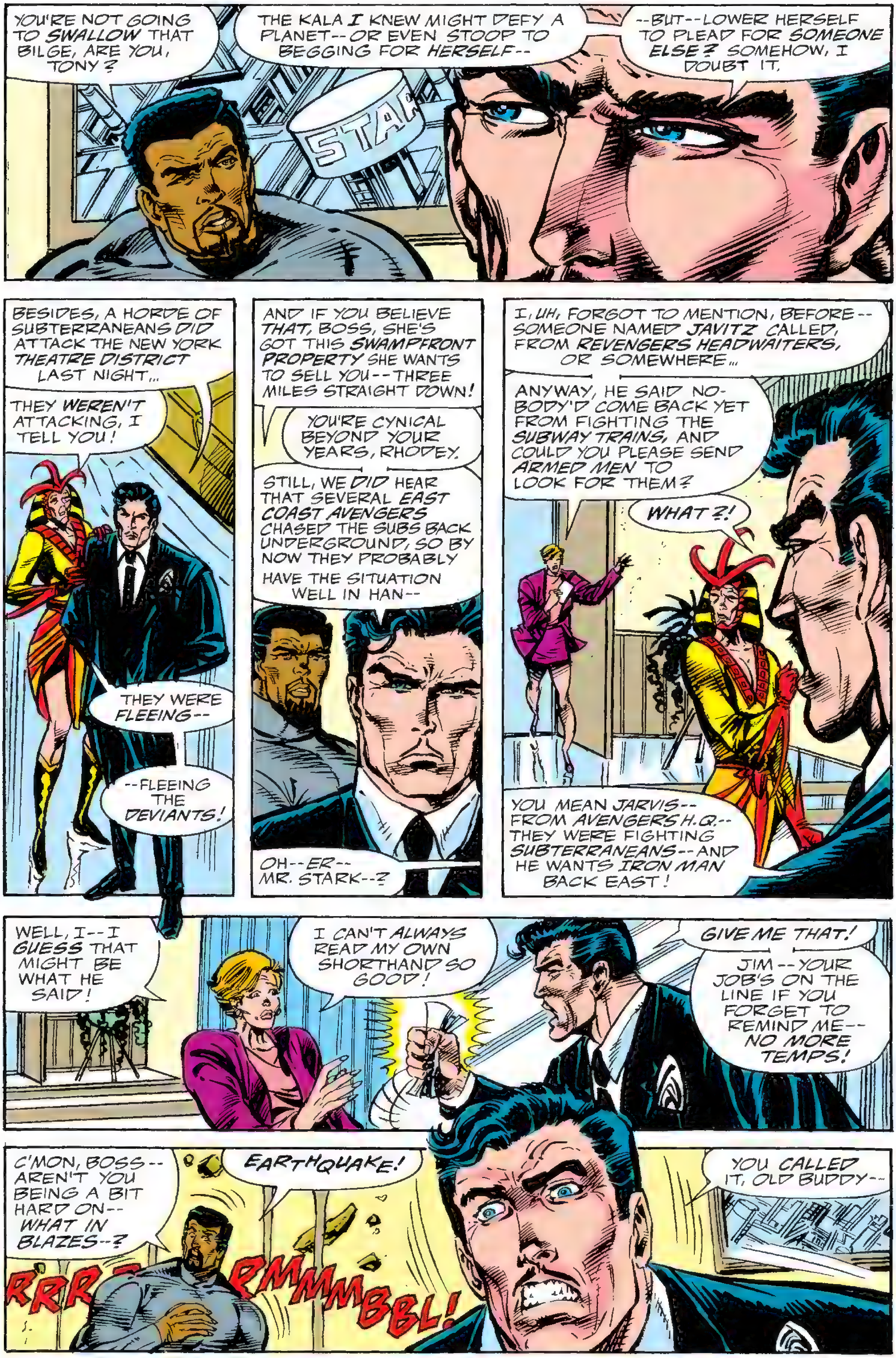

I CAN COVER FOR YOU, TONY, IF YOU DON'T WANT TO--
I'VE HAD *ENOUGH* OF PLAYING *IRON MAN* FOR ONE MORNING.
FRANKLY, I COULD USE A NICE FISCAL CRISIS, JUST AS A CHANGE OF PACE.
RELEASE ME, YOU SUN-BAKED CRETINS!
EASY, LADY...
OH, MR. STARK--THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE HERE!
STARK SECURITY
WHAT'S WRONG-- UH--
I'M MS. PODNIK --THE TEMP AGENCY SENT ME OVER?
RIGHT. SO-- WHO'S THE GERIATRIC *GATE-CRASHER?*
THIS WOMAN SNEAKED PAST SECURITY --AND SHE'S BEEN REFUSING TO LEAVE TILL SHE *TALKS* TO YOU.
I--I'M SORRY FOR PAGING YOU, BUT WE WEREN'T SURE WHAT TO--
IT'S ALL RIGHT, MS. PODNIK.
SO YOU'VE GOT *ANOTHER* SECRET LIFE NOBODY KNOWS ABOUT, HUH, BOSS-MAN?
LEAVING A TRAIL OF BROKEN OLD LADIES' HEARTS--
--BUT NOW THEY'VE FINALLY *CAUGHT UP* WITH YOU.
WHAT CAN I SAY, RHODEY?
YOU'VE EITHER GOT OR YOU HAVEN'T GOT *CHARM.*

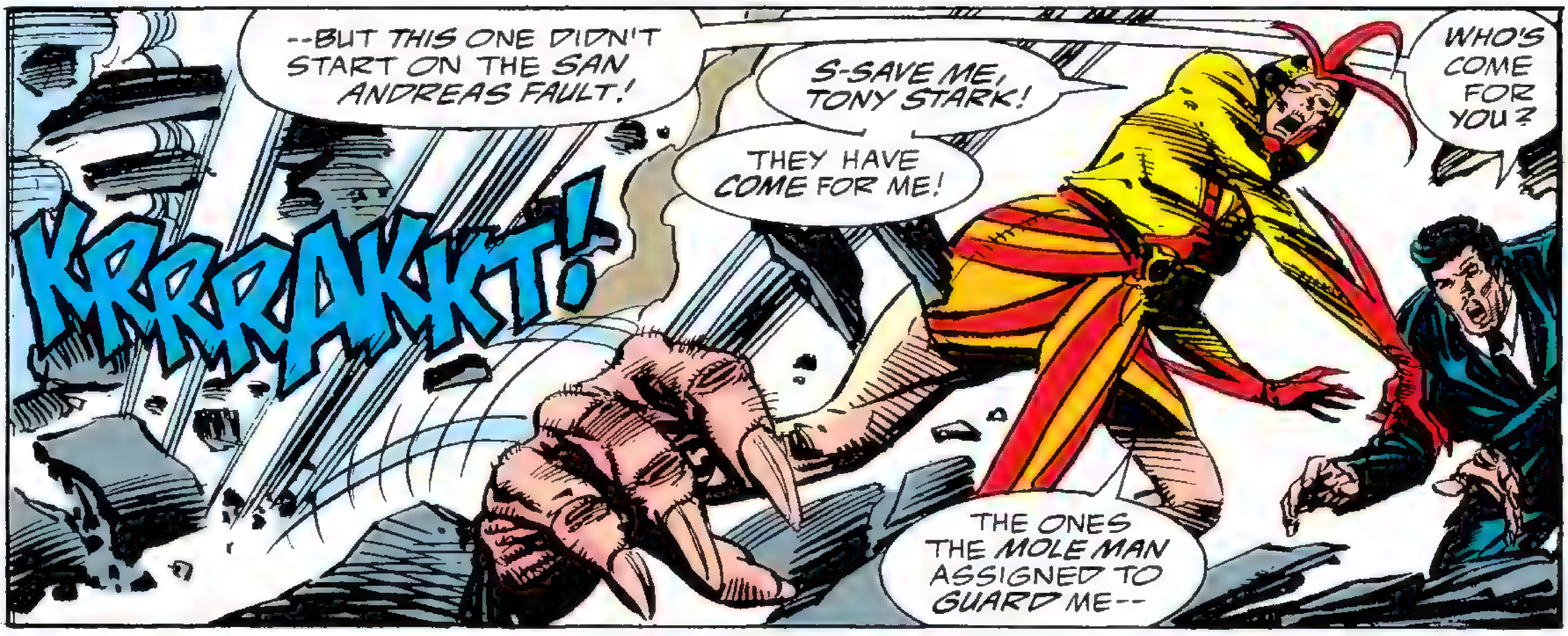

NOW, WHAT CAN I *DO* FOR YOU, MISS...?
I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED YOU WOULD NOT *KNOW* ME.
SHOULD I?
I... SUPPOSE NOT. IN FACT, EVEN WHEN I REMOVE MY COWL, YOU MAY NOT RECOGNIZE--
--THE FORMER QUEEN OF THE NETHERWORLD!
KALA?!?
I'M--SORRY. BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER, YEARS AGO.
I'D HEARD YOU'D--*AGED*, AFTER YOUR LAST BOUT WITH THE *MOLE MAN*, BUT--
MAY WE SPEAK IN *PRIVATE*, TONY STARK?
WELL, *JIM* STAYS--BUT I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES MINUS MY SECURITY GUARDS.
HE'S GONNA *TALK* TO THAT NUT? HE MUST BE AS CRAZY AS SHE IS!
WHAT HE *IS*, LADY--IS *THE BOSS*.
STARK INTERNATI
STARK SECURITY
WE'LL BE *RIGHT OUTSIDE* IF YOU WANT US, MR. STARK!
STARK SECURITY
NOW, WHY ARE YOU HERE, KALA?
THE ONE TIME YOU EVER CAME UP FROM BENEATH THE EARTH, IT *WASN'T* A SOCIAL CALL.
I SUPPOSE THAT'S TRUE.
YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE ANYTHING I MAY SAY TO YOU...

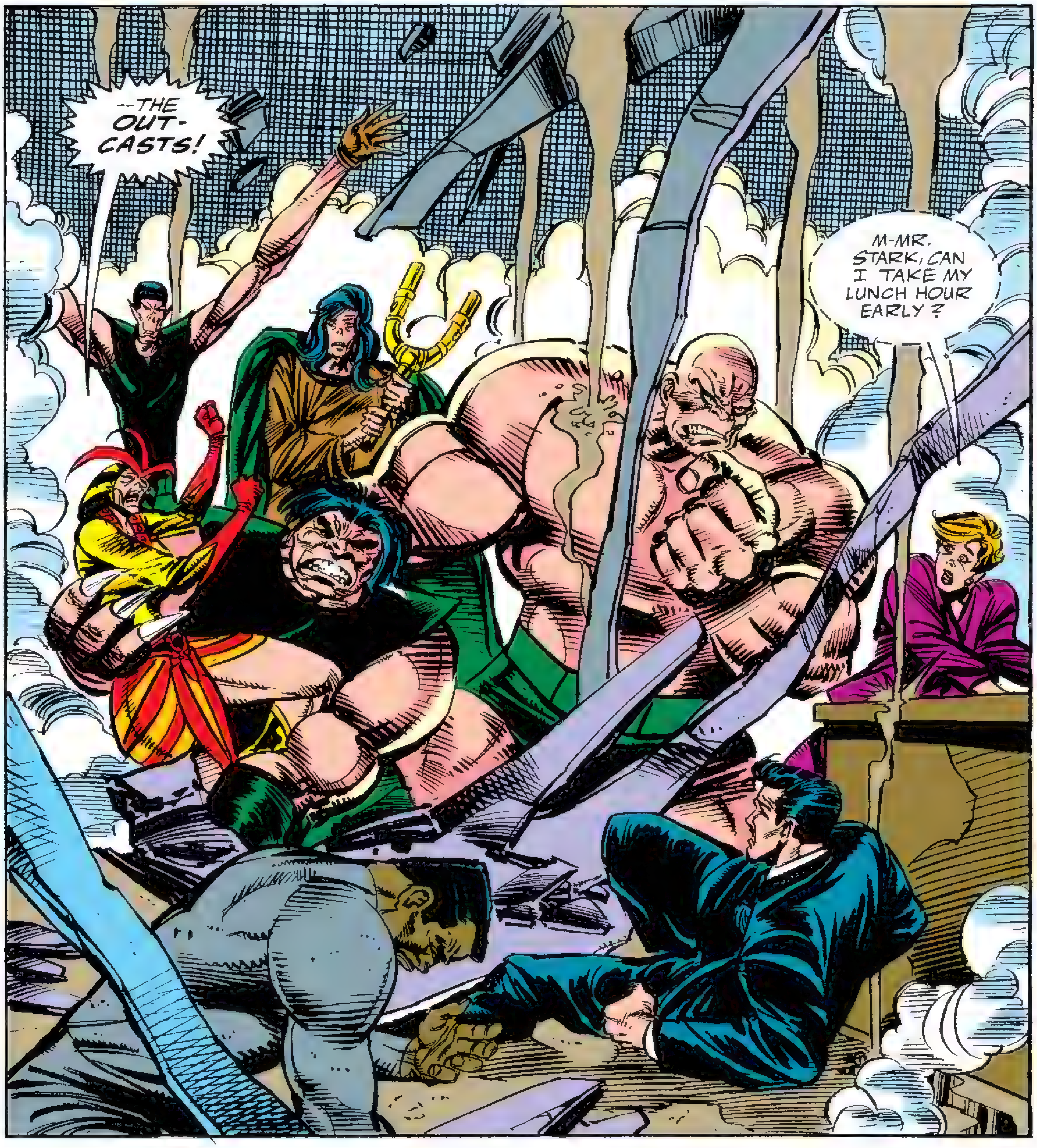

"...SINCE WE MET ONLY AFTER I KIDNAPPED YOU WITH ONE OF MY ELECTRON-POWERED CAGE-CRYSTALS--
"--AND BROUGHT YOU DOWN TO MY QUEENDOM.
"GENERAL BAXU AND I WERE MAKING PLANS TO INVADE THE OUTSIDE WORLD--
"--ONLY MONTHS AFTER THE MOLE MAN HAD TRIED THE SAME THING WITH HIS LESS HUMAN FOLLOWERS.
"UNFORTUNATELY, YOUR FORMIDABLE EMPLOYEE IRON MAN SOMEHOW FOLLOWED YOU TO MY REALM--
"--AND BORE ME SURFACE-WARD--
"--TO SHOW ME THAT, WERE I TO CONQUER THE OUTER LANDS, I WOULD SWIFTLY FALL VICTIM TO THE RAVAGES OF TIME.
"THE CONDITIONS IN MY DOMAIN ARE SUCH THAT, WHILE I HAD REMAINED THERE, I HAD NOT AGED.
"RETURNING BELOW-GROUND, I BECAME 'YOUNG' AGAIN.
"I EVEN TOOK IRON MAN'S ADVICE, AND WED MY FAITHFUL GENERAL.
"HE WAS A GOOD CONSORT, BUT DIED, NOT LONG AFTERWARD.

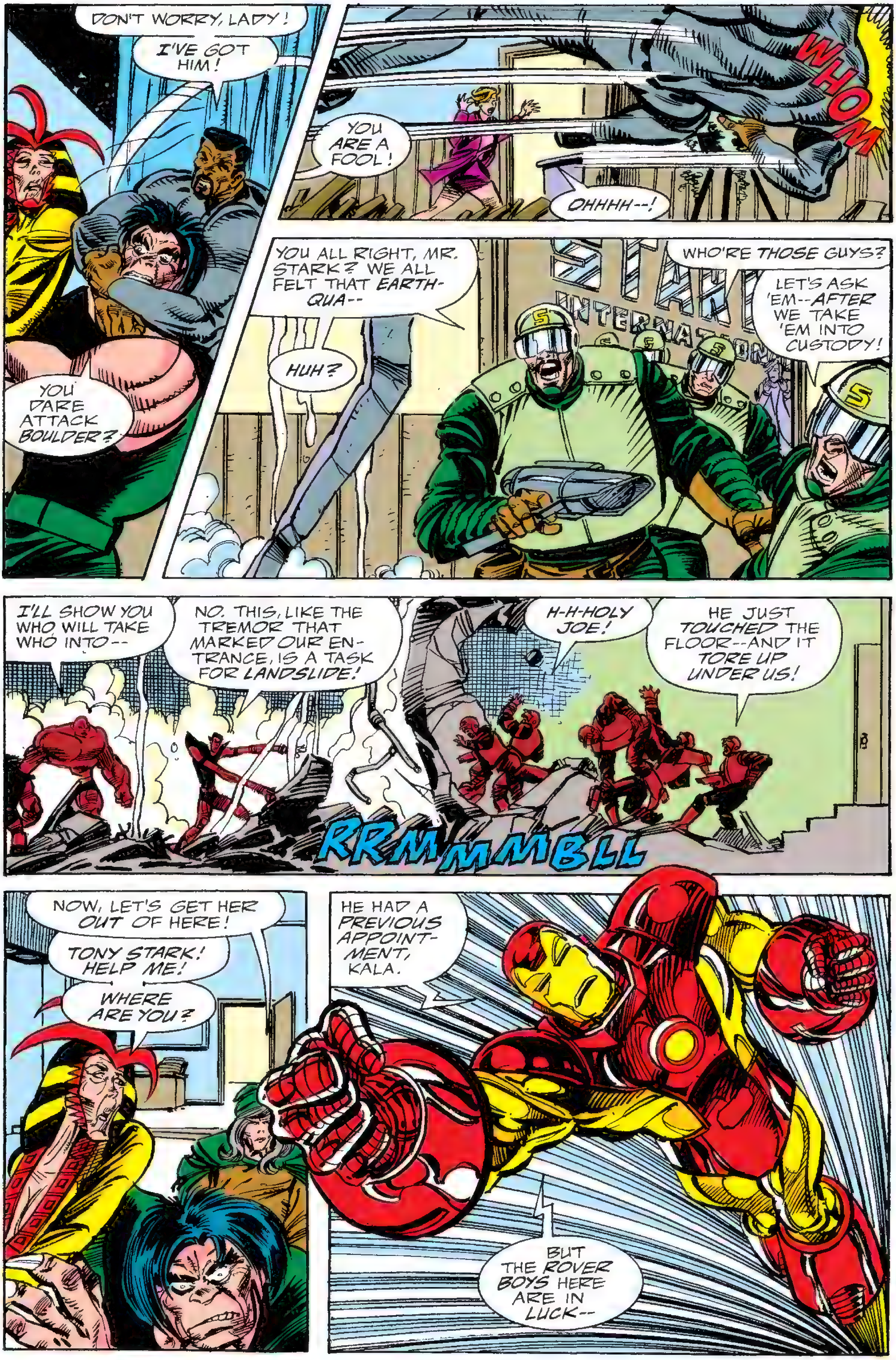

"I DO NOT KNOW HOW MUCH YOU MAY KNOW ABOUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE THEN.
"LATER, I PRETENDED TO LOVE THE MOLE MAN, AND WE PLANNED YET ANOTHER INVASION OF THE SUNWARD SPHERE.
"EVEN THE VAUNTED THING FELL TO US, AT FIRST.
"BUT THE MAN I REALLY DESIRED AS MY NEW KING WAS TYRANNUS, WHO HAD ONCE BEEN AN EMPEROR OF FABLED ROME.
"TOGETHER WE IMPRISONED MY HAPLESS 'FIANCEE.'
"THE TRUE JOKE, HOWEVER WAS ON ME. TYRANNUS HAD MERELY USED ME, AND NOW I, TOO, BECAME HIS PRISONER.
"EVEN AFTER THE FANTASTIC FOUR SAVED US BOTH, MY LONELY EX-BETROTHED WAS SADDENED, MORE THAN ANGERED, BY MY TREACHERY.
"I? I REGRETTED ONLY THAT MY SCHEME HAD FAILED--
"--AND THAT THE MOLE MAN NOW CONTROLLED TYRANNUS'S FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH.
"LATER, HE AND I STAGED OUR OWN OUTLAW OLYMPICS, USING CAPTIVE SURFACE ATHLETES.
"WE EVEN FORCED SPIDER-MAN AND THE EVER-BESTIAL HULK TO BATTLE EACH OTHER, AS OUR PROXIES.

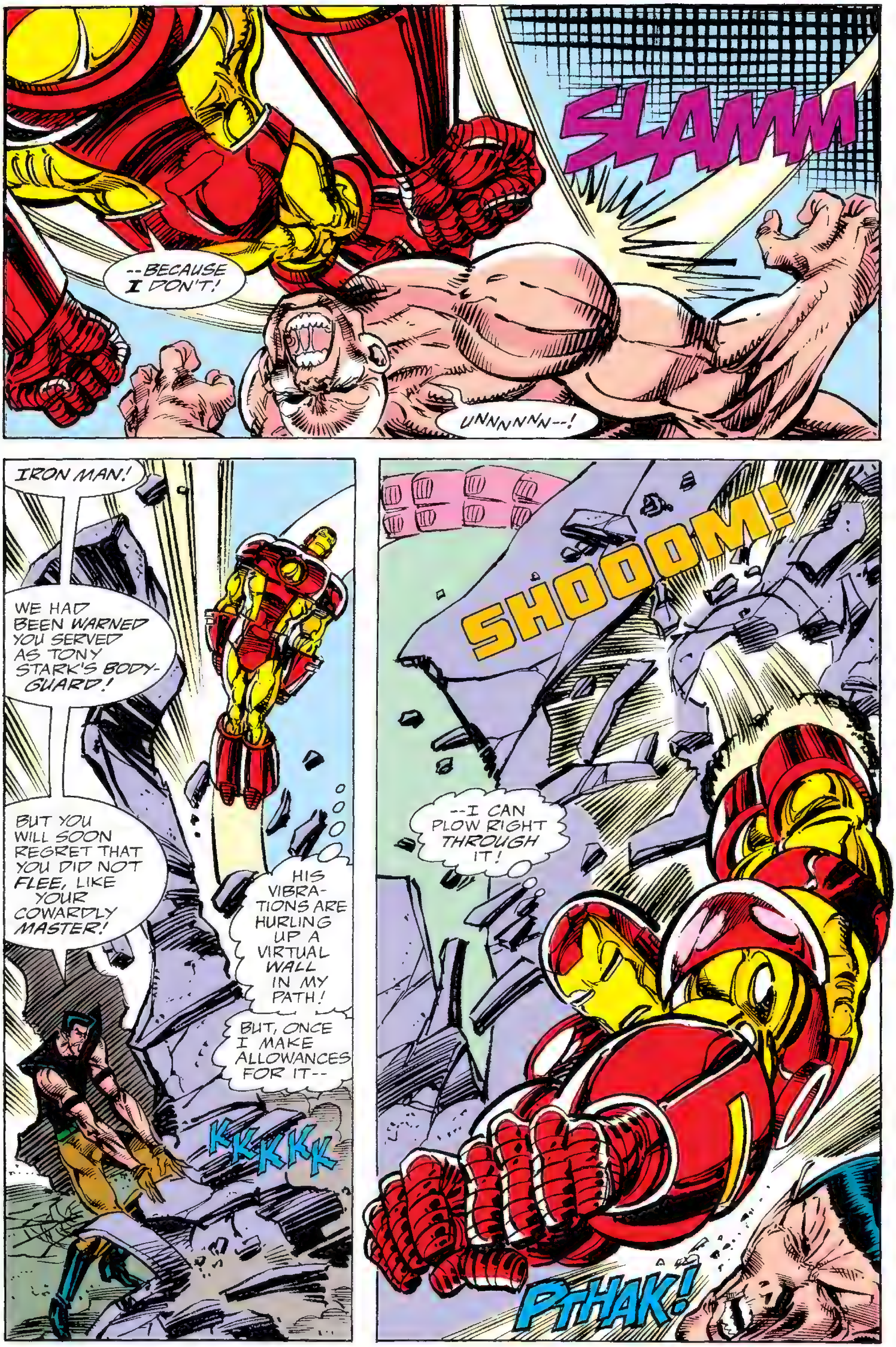

"BUT WHEN THEY INEVITABLY JOINED FORCES, WE WERE SOUNDLY *DEFEATED*. AND WHEN THE *LAVA MEN* I THEN CONTROLLED PULLED ME FORTH FROM THE SNOW, I LOOKED AND FELT *OLD* AS SUBTERRANEAN HILLS.
"YOU SEE, I HAD BEGUN TO *AGE* AGAIN--AND ONLY THE *FOUNTAIN* COULD REVERSE THE PROCESS.
"BUT WHILE OUR FORCES CONTESTED, ITS WATERS *DRAINED AWAY*--TO DEPTHS BEYOND EVEN OUR REACH.
"THUS I, WHO HAD BASELY BETRAYED THE MOLE MAN, WAS REDUCED TO DOING WHAT I HAD NEVER DONE BEFORE, IN ALL MY CENTURIES OF LIFE:
"I *BEGGED*.
THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH--*GONE! GONE!!*
I WILL BE *OLD* AND *WITHERED* FOR THE REST OF MY DAYS!
KALA...THOUGH YOU MOCKED ME AND SPURNED MY LOVE... I STILL DESIRE A *QUEEN* TO RULE BESIDE ME.
IT MATTERS NOT THE WAY SHE LOOKS--
--FOR, IN SUBTERRANEA, THERE ARE *NO LIGHTS* TO SEE.
I RETURNED WITH HIM TO HIS KINGDOM.*
MOLEY'S FOUGHT *VARIOUS* SUPER HEROES SINCE THEN--BUT I'VE NEVER HEARD OF *YOU* BEING INVOLVED IN ANY WAY.
BECAUSE--HE *FORGOT* ABOUT ME!
FOR A TIME HE TREATED ME WELL--AT LEAST FROM A *DISTANCE*--BUT SOON HE RELEGATED ME TO MY OWN GUARDED CHAMBERS.
BUT--A *STRANGE THING* HAD HAPPENED TO ME, TONY STARK.
HIS SINGULAR ACT OF *KINDNESS*--HAD MADE ME *TRULY* FALL IN LOVE WITH THE MOLE MAN!
*KALA'S EXTENDED MONOLOGUE COURTESY OF *TALES OF SUSPENSE* #43, *F.F.* #127-128, AND *MARVEL TREASURY EDITION* #25 --NEL
"THUS, WHEN HE AND *TYRANNUS* WERE FORCED INTO AN UNEASY ALLIANCE AGAINST THE *DEVIANTS*, I SEIZED THE CHANCE TO *ESCAPE*...
"...AND MADE MY WAY *UPWARD*, IN SEARCH OF HELP.
"*YOU* ARE THE ONLY SURFACE-MAN I EVER REALLY *MET*, TONY STARK.
"WILL YOU ORDER YOUR SERVANT *IRON MAN* TO AID ME--AND THE *MAN I LOVE?*"

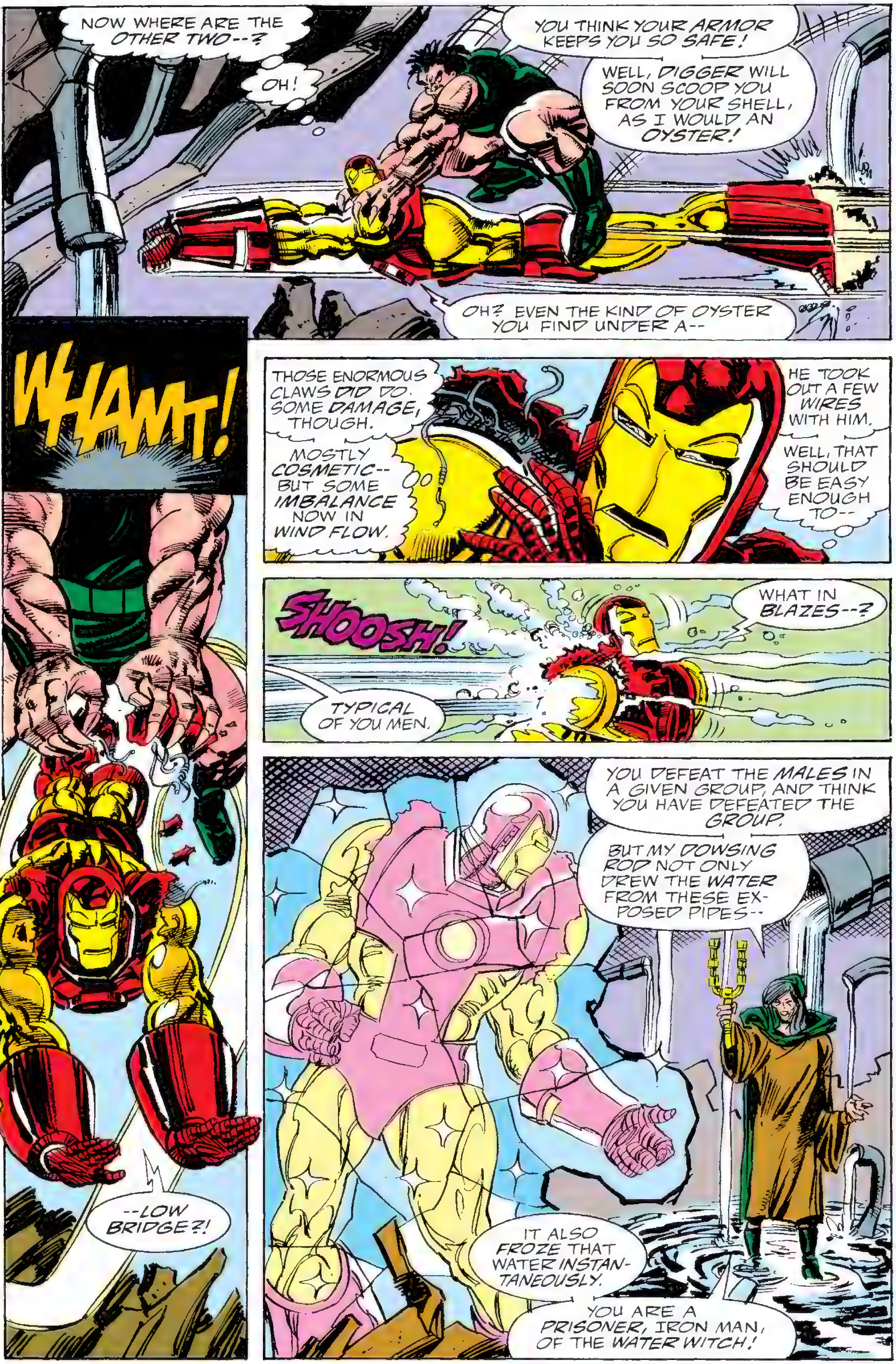

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SWALLOW THAT BILGE, ARE YOU, TONY?
THE KALA I KNEW MIGHT DEFY A PLANET--OR EVEN STOOP TO BEGGING FOR HERSELF--
--BUT--LOWER HERSELF TO PLEAD FOR SOMEONE ELSE? SOMEHOW, I DOUBT IT.
STAR
BESIDES, A HORDE OF SUBTERRANEANS DID ATTACK THE NEW YORK THEATRE DISTRICT LAST NIGHT...
THEY WEREN'T ATTACKING, I TELL YOU!
THEY WERE FLEEING--
--FLEEING THE DEVIANTS!
AND IF YOU BELIEVE THAT, BOSS, SHE'S GOT THIS SWAMPFRONT PROPERTY SHE WANTS TO SELL YOU--THREE MILES STRAIGHT DOWN!
YOU'RE CYNICAL BEYOND YOUR YEARS, RHODEY.
STILL, WE DID HEAR THAT SEVERAL EAST COAST AVENGERS CHASED THE SUBS BACK UNDERGROUND, SO BY NOW THEY PROBABLY HAVE THE SITUATION WELL IN HAN--
OH--ER--MR. STARK--?
I, UH, FORGOT TO MENTION, BEFORE--SOMEONE NAMED JAVITZ CALLED, FROM REVENGERS HEADWAITERS, OR SOMEWHERE...
ANYWAY, HE SAID NOBODY'D COME BACK YET FROM FIGHTING THE SUBWAY TRAINS, AND COULD YOU PLEASE SEND ARMED MEN TO LOOK FOR THEM?
WHAT?!
YOU MEAN JARVIS--FROM AVENGERS H.Q.--THEY WERE FIGHTING SUBTERRANEANS--AND HE WANTS IRON MAN BACK EAST!
WELL, I--I GUESS THAT MIGHT BE WHAT HE SAID!
I CAN'T ALWAYS READ MY OWN SHORTHAND SO GOOD!
GIVE ME THAT!
JIM--YOUR JOB'S ON THE LINE IF YOU FORGET TO REMIND ME--NO MORE TEMPS!
C'MON, BOSS--AREN'T YOU BEING A BIT HARD ON--WHAT IN BLAZES--?
EARTHQUAKE!
YOU CALLED IT, OLD BUDDY--
RRRRRRMMMMBBL!

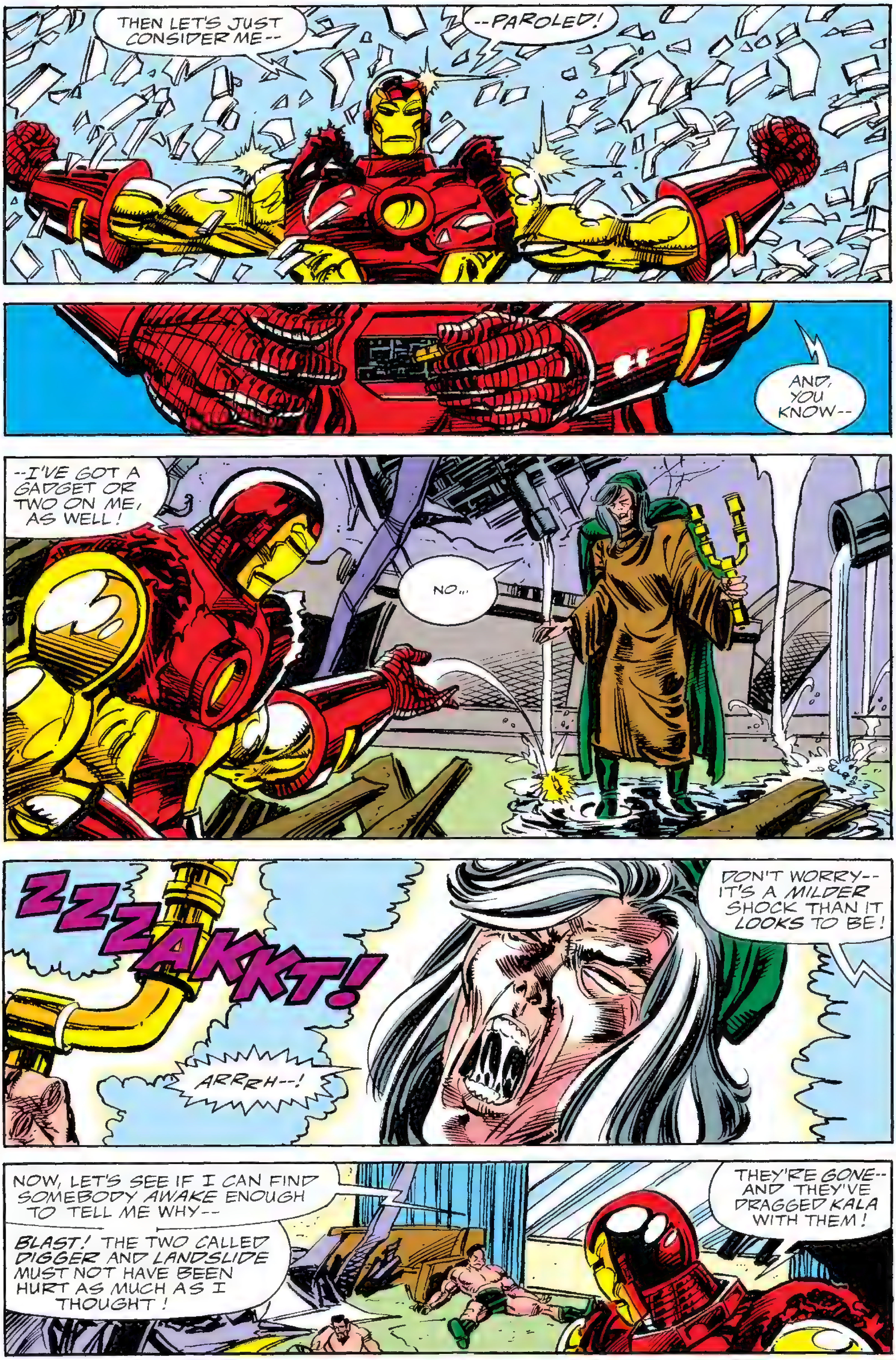

--BUT THIS ONE DIDN'T START ON THE SAN ANDREAS FAULT!
S-SAVE ME, TONY STARK!
THEY HAVE COME FOR ME!
WHO'S COME FOR YOU?
KRRRAKKT!
THE ONES THE MOLE MAN ASSIGNED TO GUARD ME--

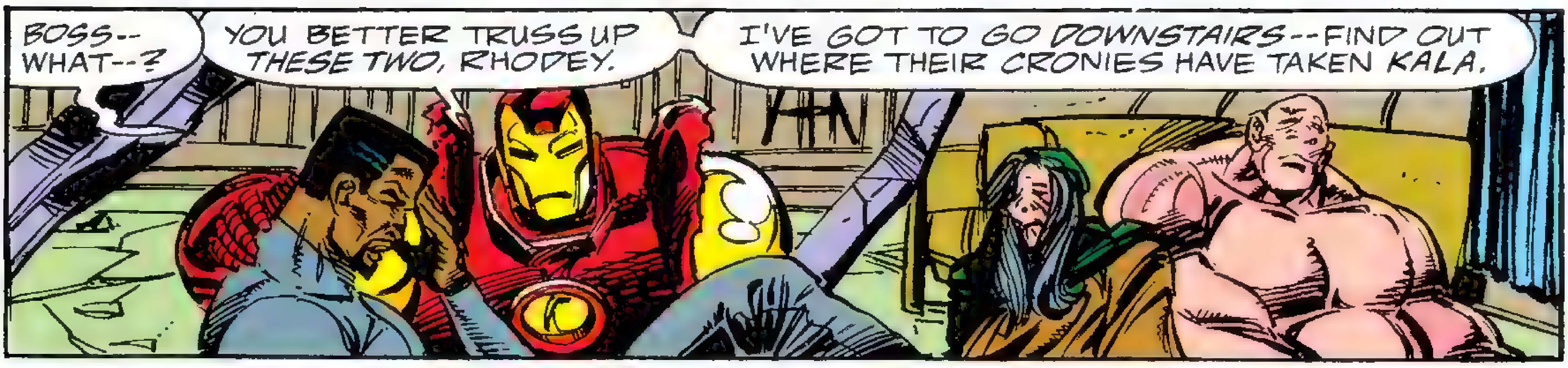

--THE OUT-CASTS!
M-MR. STARK, CAN I TAKE MY LUNCH HOUR EARLY?

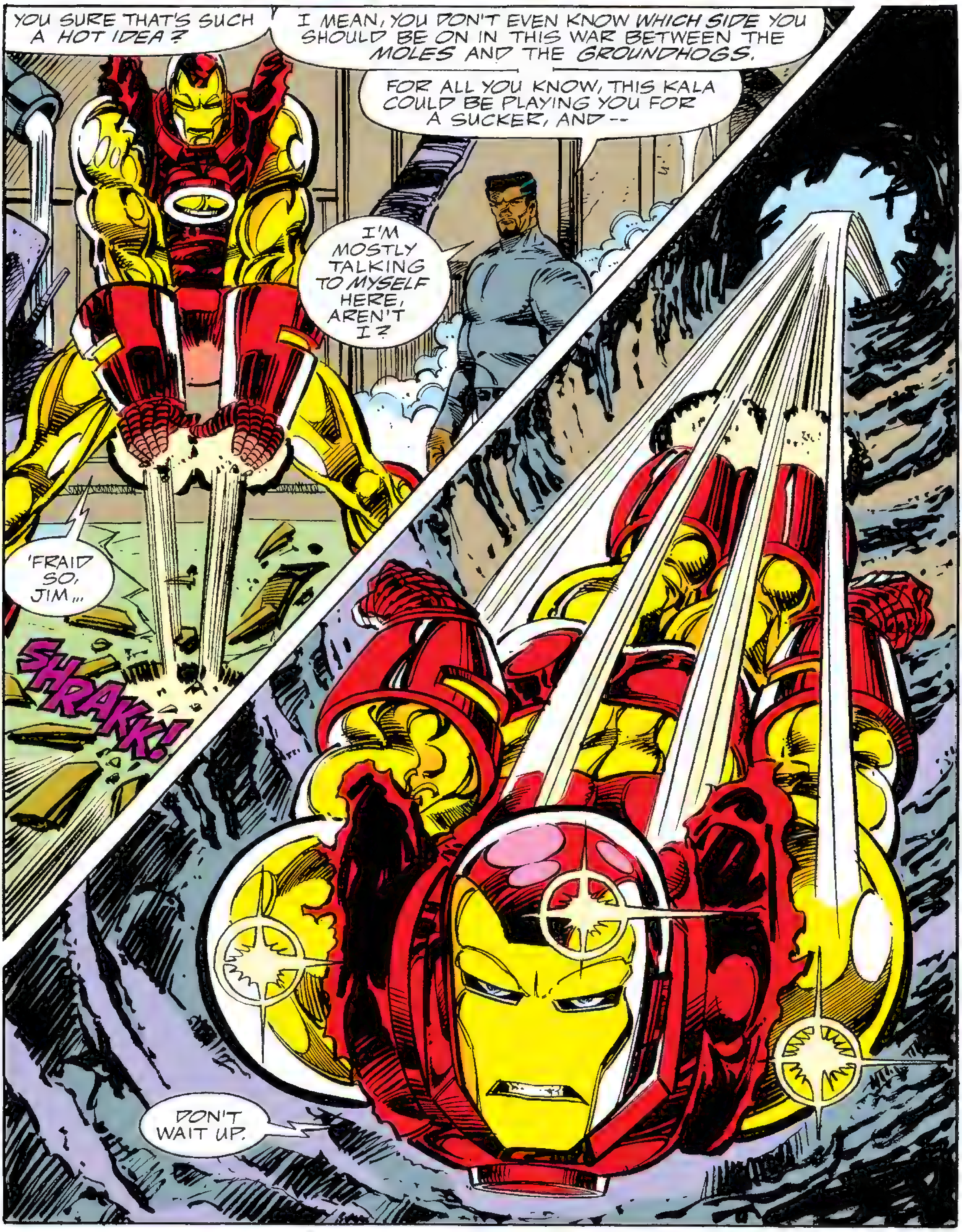

DON'T WORRY, LADY!
I'VE GOT HIM!
YOU DARE ATTACK BOULDER?
WHOM
YOU ARE A FOOL!
OHHHH--!
YOU ALL RIGHT, MR. STARK? WE ALL FELT THAT EARTHQUA--
HUH?
WHO'RE THOSE GUYS?
LET'S ASK 'EM--AFTER WE TAKE 'EM INTO CUSTODY!
STARK INTERNATIONAL
I'LL SHOW YOU WHO WILL TAKE WHO INTO--
NO. THIS, LIKE THE TREMOR THAT MARKED OUR ENTRANCE, IS A TASK FOR LANDSLIDE!
H-H-HOLY JOE!
HE JUST TOUCHED THE FLOOR--AND IT TORE UP UNDER US!
RRMMMMBLL
NOW, LET'S GET HER OUT OF HERE!
TONY STARK! HELP ME!
WHERE ARE YOU?
HE HAD A PREVIOUS APPOINTMENT, KALA.
BUT THE ROVER BOYS HERE ARE IN LUCK--

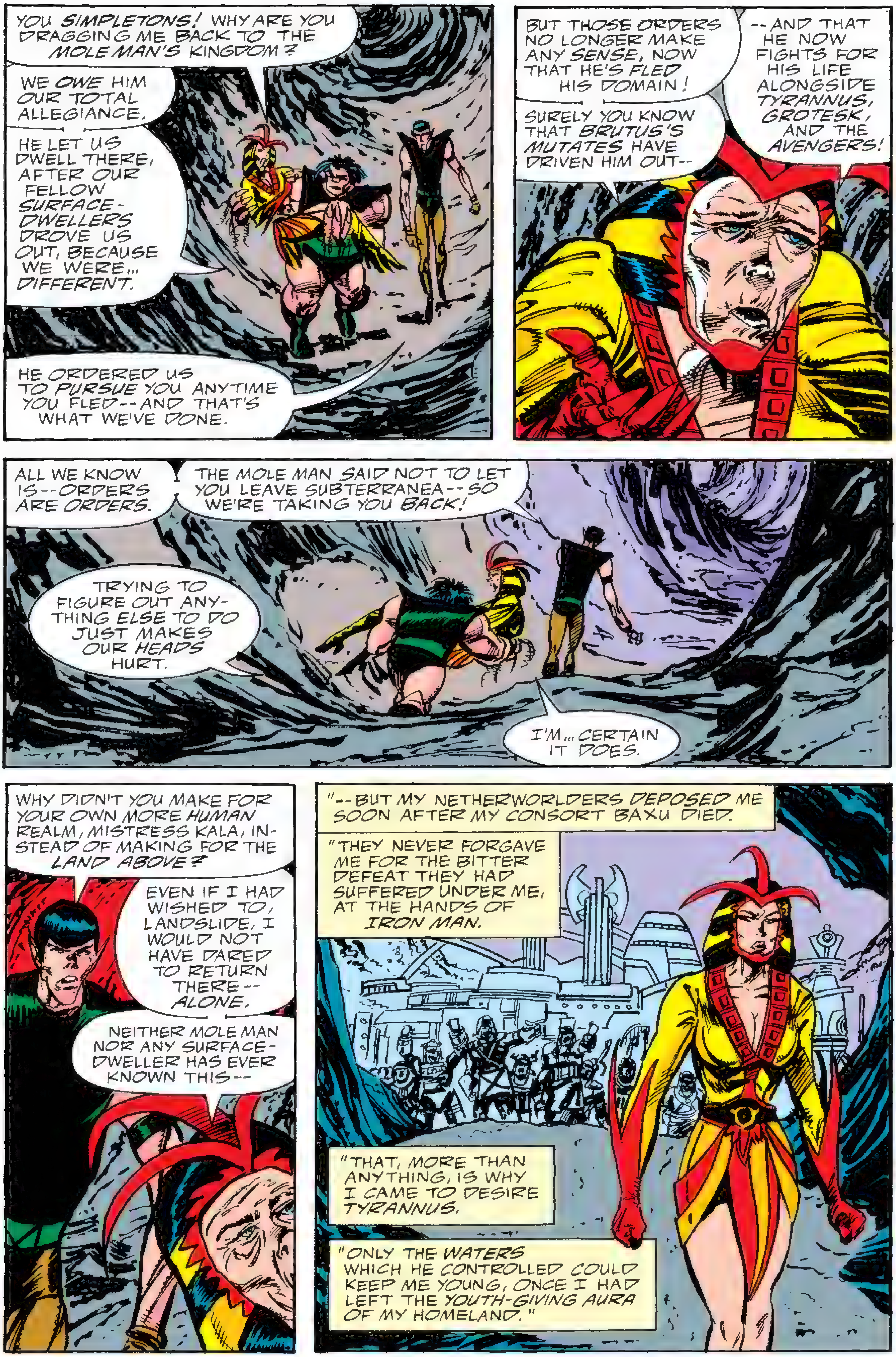

SLAMM
--BECAUSE I DON'T!
UNNNNNN--!
IRON MAN!
WE HAD BEEN WARNED YOU SERVED AS TONY STARK'S BODY-GUARD!
BUT YOU WILL SOON REGRET THAT YOU DID NOT FLEE, LIKE YOUR COWARDLY MASTER!
HIS VIBRATIONS ARE HURLING UP A VIRTUAL WALL IN MY PATH!
BUT, ONCE I MAKE ALLOWANCES FOR IT--
KKKKK
SHOOOM!
--I CAN PLOW RIGHT THROUGH IT!
PTHAK!

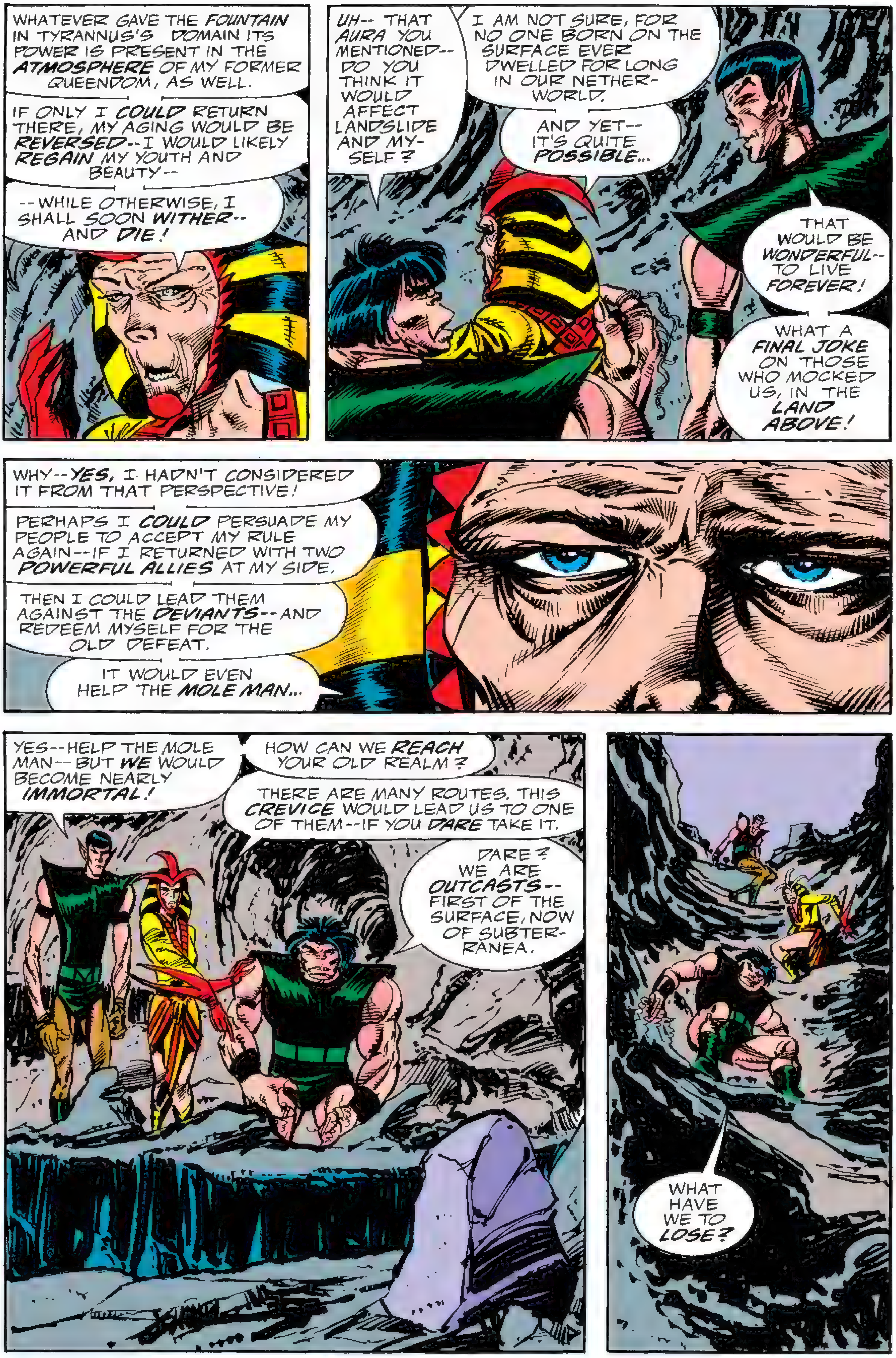

NOW WHERE ARE THE OTHER TWO--?
OH!
YOU THINK YOUR ARMOR KEEPS YOU SO SAFE!
WELL, DIGGER WILL SOON SCOOP YOU FROM YOUR SHELL, AS I WOULD AN OYSTER!
OH? EVEN THE KIND OF OYSTER YOU FIND UNDER A--
WHAMT!
--LOW BRIDGE?!
THOSE ENORMOUS CLAWS DID DO SOME DAMAGE, THOUGH.
MOSTLY COSMETIC-- BUT SOME IMBALANCE NOW IN WIND FLOW.
HE TOOK OUT A FEW WIRES WITH HIM.
WELL, THAT SHOULD BE EASY ENOUGH TO--
SHOOSH!
WHAT IN BLAZES--?
TYPICAL OF YOU MEN.
YOU DEFEAT THE MALES IN A GIVEN GROUP, AND THINK YOU HAVE DEFEATED THE GROUP.
BUT MY DOWSING ROD NOT ONLY DREW THE WATER FROM THESE EXPOSED PIPES--
IT ALSO FROZE THAT WATER INSTANTANEOUSLY.
YOU ARE A PRISONER, IRON MAN, OF THE WATER WITCH!

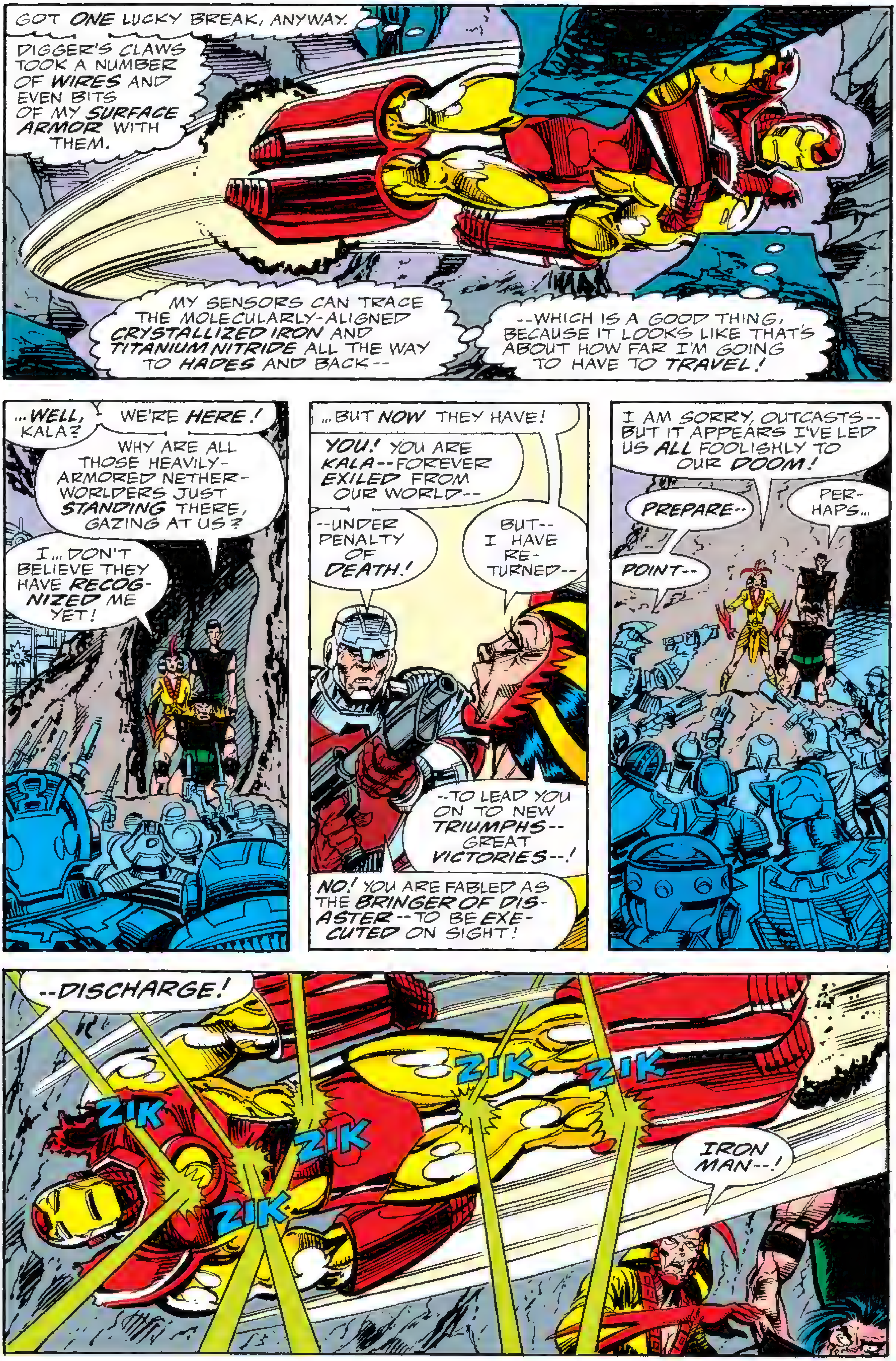

THEN LET'S JUST CONSIDER ME--
--PAROLED!
AND, YOU KNOW--
--I'VE GOT A GADGET OR TWO ON ME, AS WELL!
NO...
ZZZAKKKT!
ARRRH--!
DON'T WORRY-- IT'S A *MILDER* SHOCK THAN IT *LOOKS* TO BE!
NOW, LET'S SEE IF I CAN FIND SOMEBODY *AWAKE* ENOUGH TO TELL ME WHY--
THEY'RE *GONE*-- AND THEY'VE DRAGGED *KALA* WITH THEM!
BLAST! THE TWO CALLED *DIGGER* AND *LANDSLIDE* MUST NOT HAVE BEEN HURT AS MUCH AS I THOUGHT!

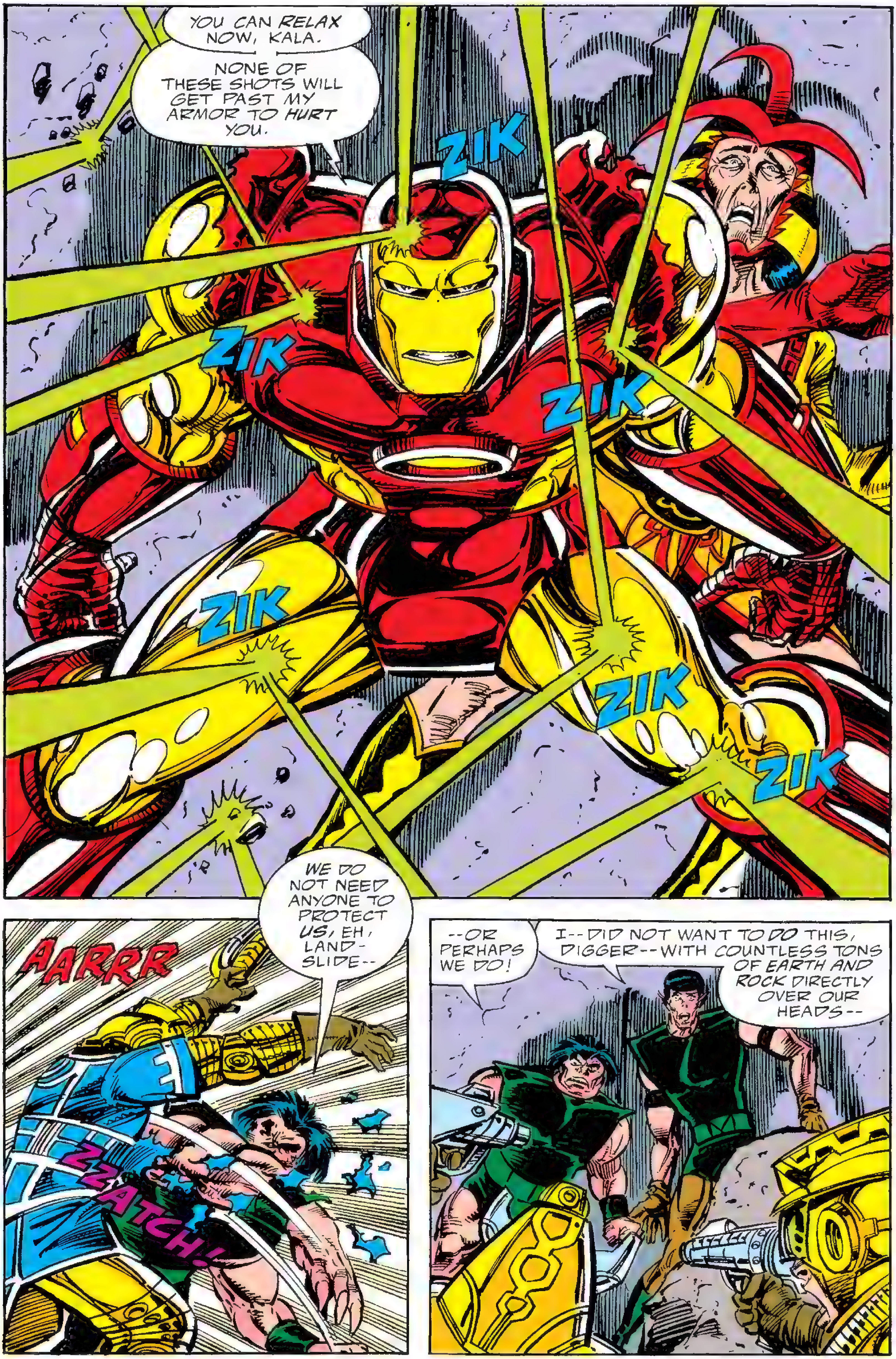

BOSS-- WHAT--?
YOU BETTER TRUSS UP THESE TWO, RHODEY.
I'VE GOT TO GO DOWNSTAIRS--FIND OUT WHERE THEIR CRONIES HAVE TAKEN KALA.

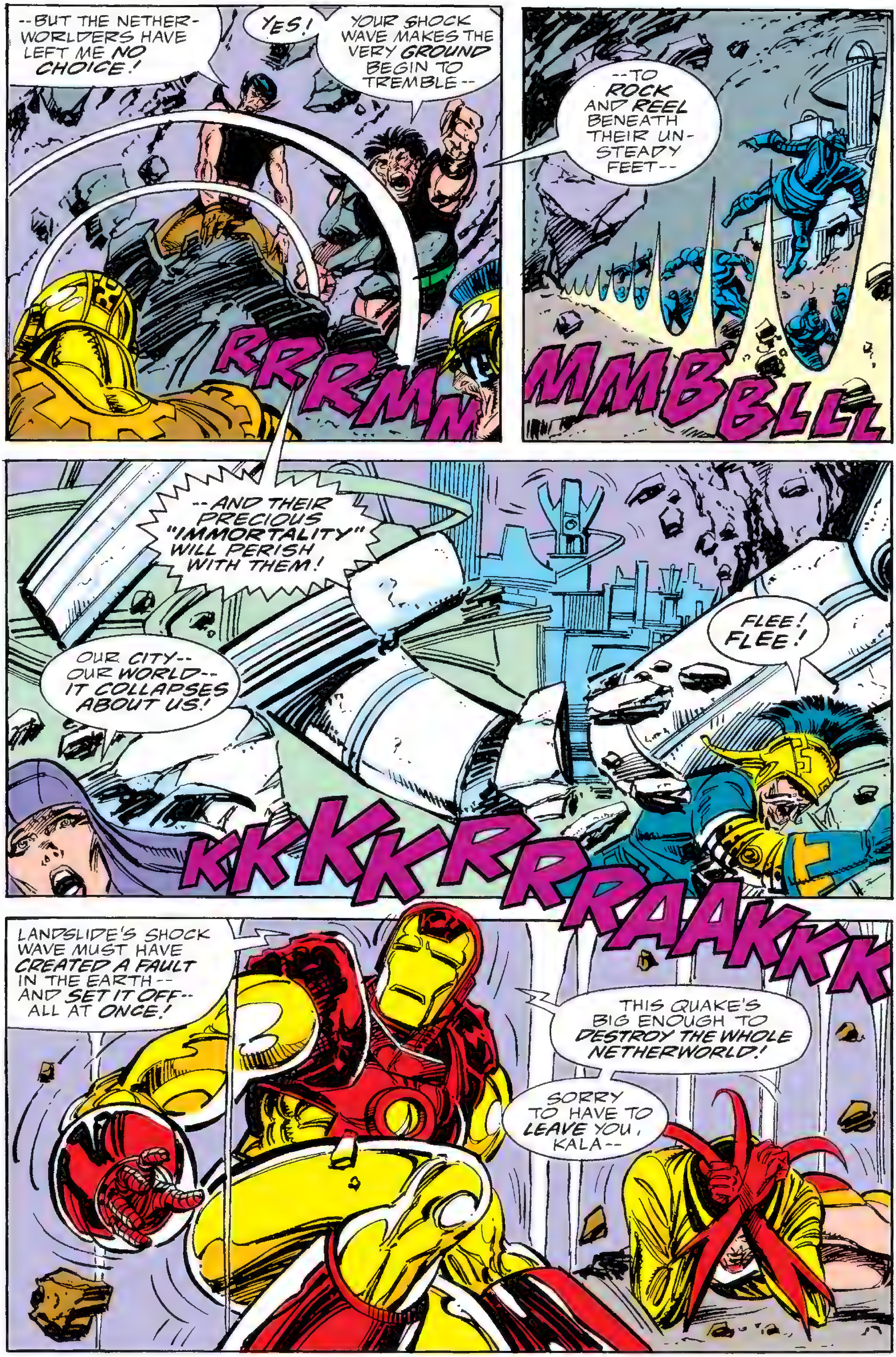

YOU SURE THAT'S SUCH A HOT IDEA?
I MEAN, YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHICH SIDE YOU SHOULD BE ON IN THIS WAR BETWEEN THE MOLES AND THE GROUNDHOGS.
FOR ALL YOU KNOW, THIS KALA COULD BE PLAYING YOU FOR A SUCKER, AND--
I'M MOSTLY TALKING TO MYSELF HERE, AREN'T I?
'FRAID SO, JIM...
SHRAKK!
DON'T WAIT UP.

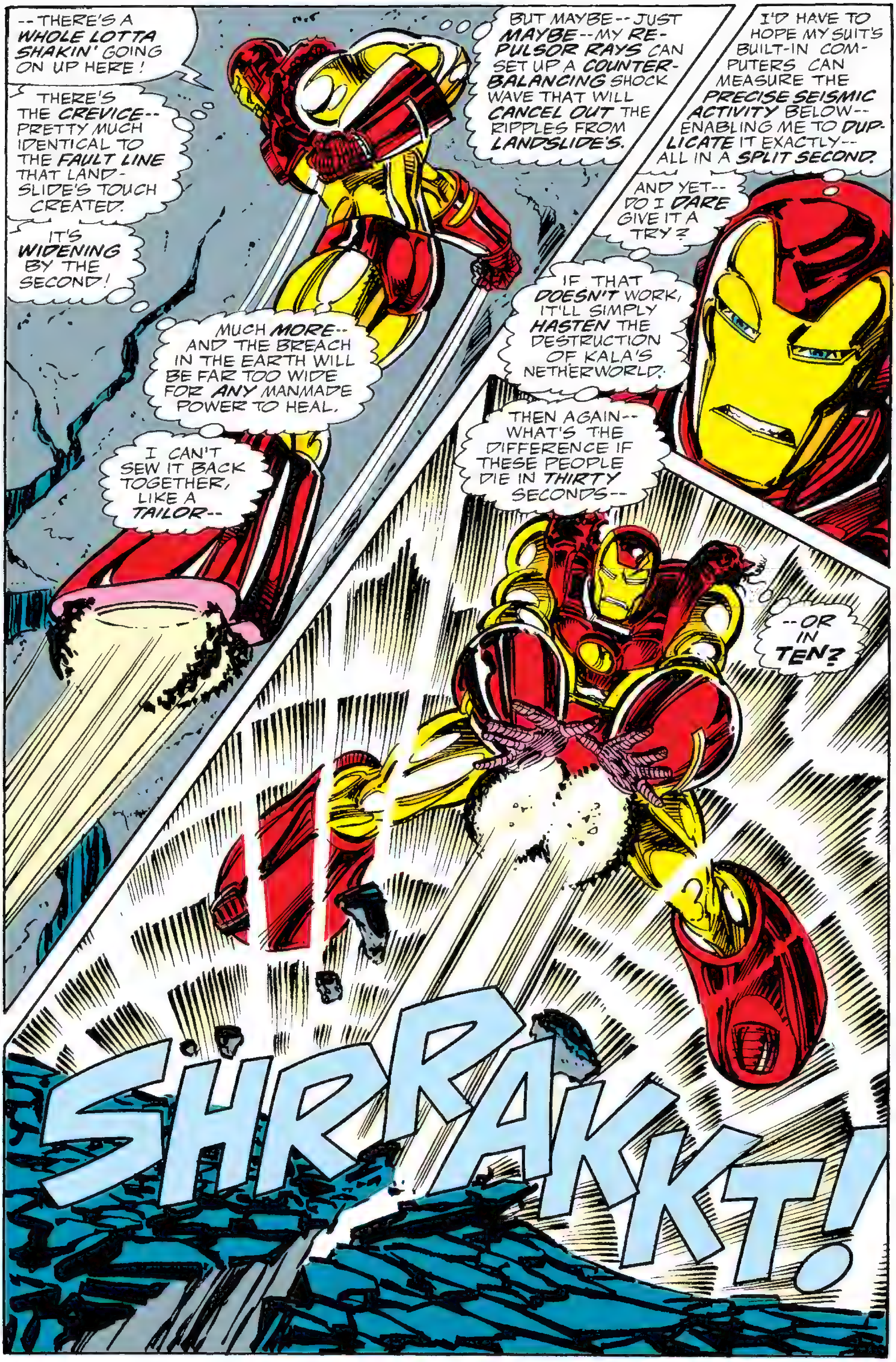

YOU SIMPLETONS! WHY ARE YOU DRAGGING ME BACK TO THE MOLE MAN'S KINGDOM?
WE OWE HIM OUR TOTAL ALLEGIANCE.
HE LET US DWELL THERE, AFTER OUR FELLOW SURFACE-DWELLERS DROVE US OUT, BECAUSE WE WERE... DIFFERENT.
HE ORDERED US TO PURSUE YOU ANYTIME YOU FLED--AND THAT'S WHAT WE'VE DONE.
BUT THOSE ORDERS NO LONGER MAKE ANY SENSE, NOW THAT HE'S FLED HIS DOMAIN!
SURELY YOU KNOW THAT BRUTUS'S MUTATES HAVE DRIVEN HIM OUT--
--AND THAT HE NOW FIGHTS FOR HIS LIFE ALONGSIDE TYRANNUS, GROTESK, AND THE AVENGERS!
ALL WE KNOW IS--ORDERS ARE ORDERS.
THE MOLE MAN SAID NOT TO LET YOU LEAVE SUBTERRANEA--SO WE'RE TAKING YOU BACK!
TRYING TO FIGURE OUT ANYTHING ELSE TO DO JUST MAKES OUR HEADS HURT.
I'M... CERTAIN IT DOES.
WHY DIDN'T YOU MAKE FOR YOUR OWN MORE HUMAN REALM, MISTRESS KALA, INSTEAD OF MAKING FOR THE LAND ABOVE?
EVEN IF I HAD WISHED TO, LANDSLIDE, I WOULD NOT HAVE DARED TO RETURN THERE--ALONE.
NEITHER MOLE MAN NOR ANY SURFACE-DWELLER HAS EVER KNOWN THIS--
"--BUT MY NETHERWORLDERS DEPOSED ME SOON AFTER MY CONSORT BAXU DIED.
"THEY NEVER FORGAVE ME FOR THE BITTER DEFEAT THEY HAD SUFFERED UNDER ME, AT THE HANDS OF IRON MAN.
"THAT, MORE THAN ANYTHING, IS WHY I CAME TO DESIRE TYRANNUS.
"ONLY THE WATERS WHICH HE CONTROLLED COULD KEEP ME YOUNG, ONCE I HAD LEFT THE YOUTH-GIVING AURA OF MY HOMELAND."

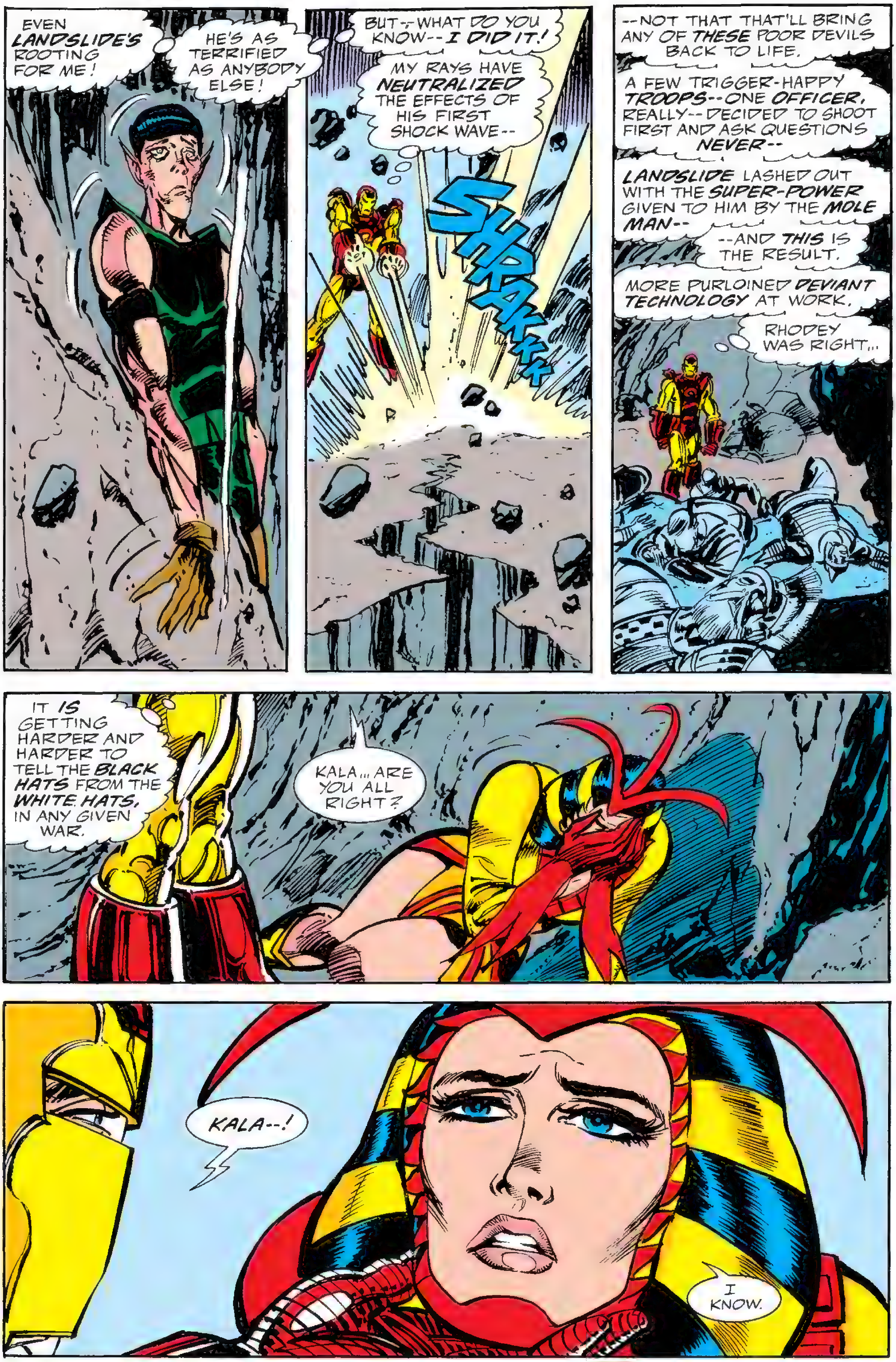

WHATEVER GAVE THE FOUNTAIN IN TYRANNUS'S DOMAIN ITS POWER IS PRESENT IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF MY FORMER QUEENDOM, AS WELL.
IF ONLY I COULD RETURN THERE, MY AGING WOULD BE REVERSED--I WOULD LIKELY REGAIN MY YOUTH AND BEAUTY--
--WHILE OTHERWISE, I SHALL SOON WITHER--AND DIE!
UH-- THAT AURA YOU MENTIONED--DO YOU THINK IT WOULD AFFECT LANDSLIDE AND MYSELF?
I AM NOT SURE, FOR NO ONE BORN ON THE SURFACE EVER DWELLED FOR LONG IN OUR NETHER-WORLD.
AND YET--IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE...
THAT WOULD BE WONDERFUL--TO LIVE FOREVER!
WHAT A FINAL JOKE ON THOSE WHO MOCKED US, IN THE LAND ABOVE!
WHY--YES, I HADN'T CONSIDERED IT FROM THAT PERSPECTIVE!
PERHAPS I COULD PERSUADE MY PEOPLE TO ACCEPT MY RULE AGAIN--IF I RETURNED WITH TWO POWERFUL ALLIES AT MY SIDE.
THEN I COULD LEAD THEM AGAINST THE DEVIANTS--AND REDEEM MYSELF FOR THE OLD DEFEAT.
IT WOULD EVEN HELP THE MOLE MAN...
YES--HELP THE MOLE MAN--BUT WE WOULD BECOME NEARLY IMMORTAL!
HOW CAN WE REACH YOUR OLD REALM?
THERE ARE MANY ROUTES. THIS CREVICE WOULD LEAD US TO ONE OF THEM--IF YOU DARE TAKE IT.
DARE? WE ARE OUTCASTS--FIRST OF THE SURFACE, NOW OF SUBTERRANEA.
WHAT HAVE WE TO LOSE?

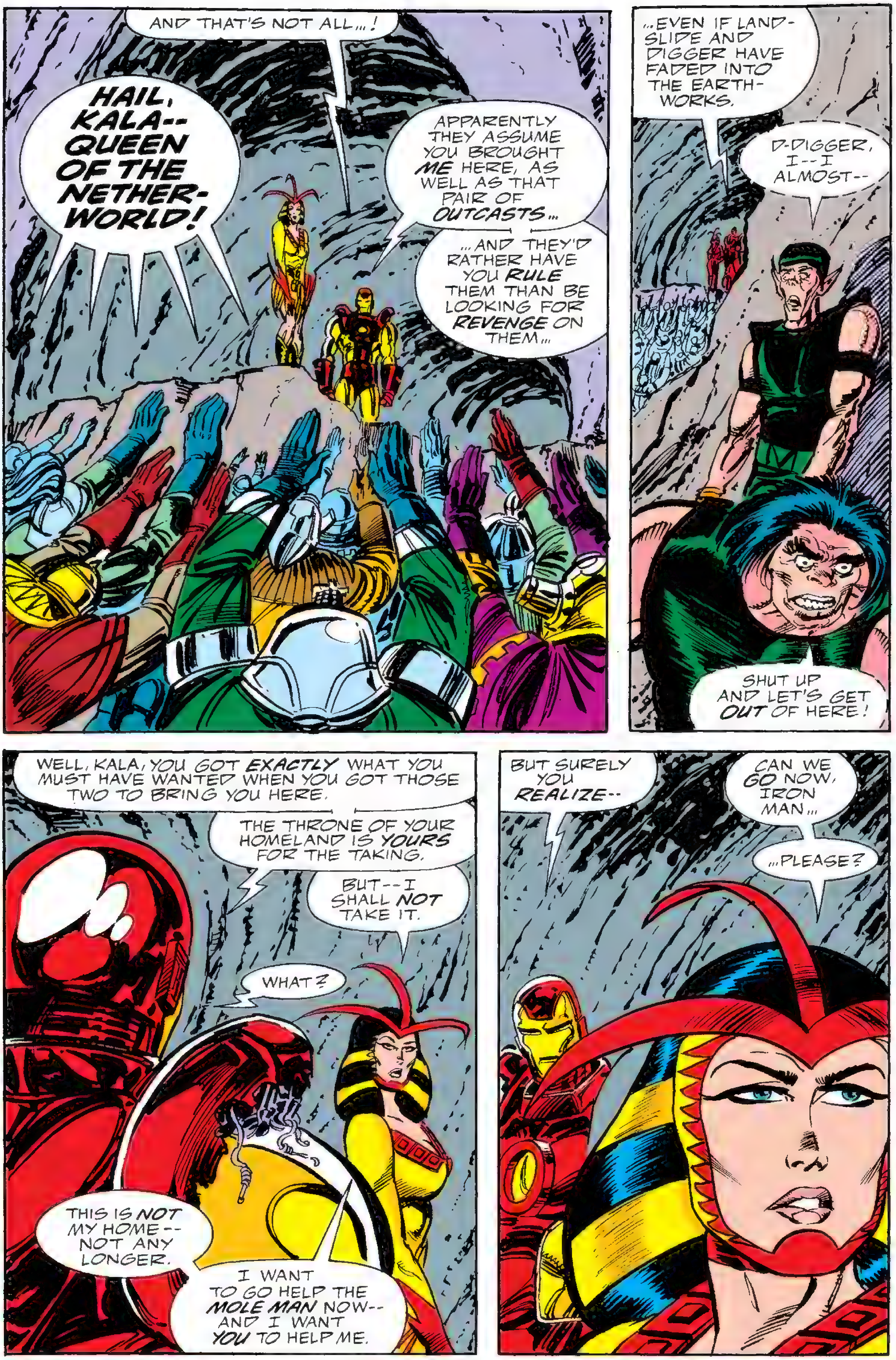

GOT ONE LUCKY BREAK, ANYWAY.
DIGGER'S CLAWS TOOK A NUMBER OF WIRES AND EVEN BITS OF MY SURFACE ARMOR WITH THEM.
MY SENSORS CAN TRACE THE MOLECULARLY-ALIGNED CRYSTALLIZED IRON AND TITANIUM NITRIDE ALL THE WAY TO HADES AND BACK--
--WHICH IS A GOOD THING, BECAUSE IT LOOKS LIKE THAT'S ABOUT HOW FAR I'M GOING TO HAVE TO TRAVEL!
...WELL, KALA?
WE'RE HERE!
WHY ARE ALL THOSE HEAVILY-ARMORED NETHER-WORLDERS JUST STANDING THERE, GAZING AT US?
I... DON'T BELIEVE THEY HAVE RECOGNIZED ME YET!
...BUT NOW THEY HAVE!
YOU! YOU ARE KALA--FOREVER EXILED FROM OUR WORLD--
--UNDER PENALTY OF DEATH!
BUT-- I HAVE RETURNED--
--TO LEAD YOU ON TO NEW TRIUMPHS--GREAT VICTORIES--!
NO! YOU ARE FABLED AS THE BRINGER OF DISASTER--TO BE EXECUTED ON SIGHT!
I AM SORRY, OUTCASTS--BUT IT APPEARS I'VE LED US ALL FOOLISHLY TO OUR DOOM!
PREPARE--
PERHAPS...
POINT--
--DISCHARGE!
ZIK
ZIK
ZIK
ZIK
ZIK
IRON MAN--!

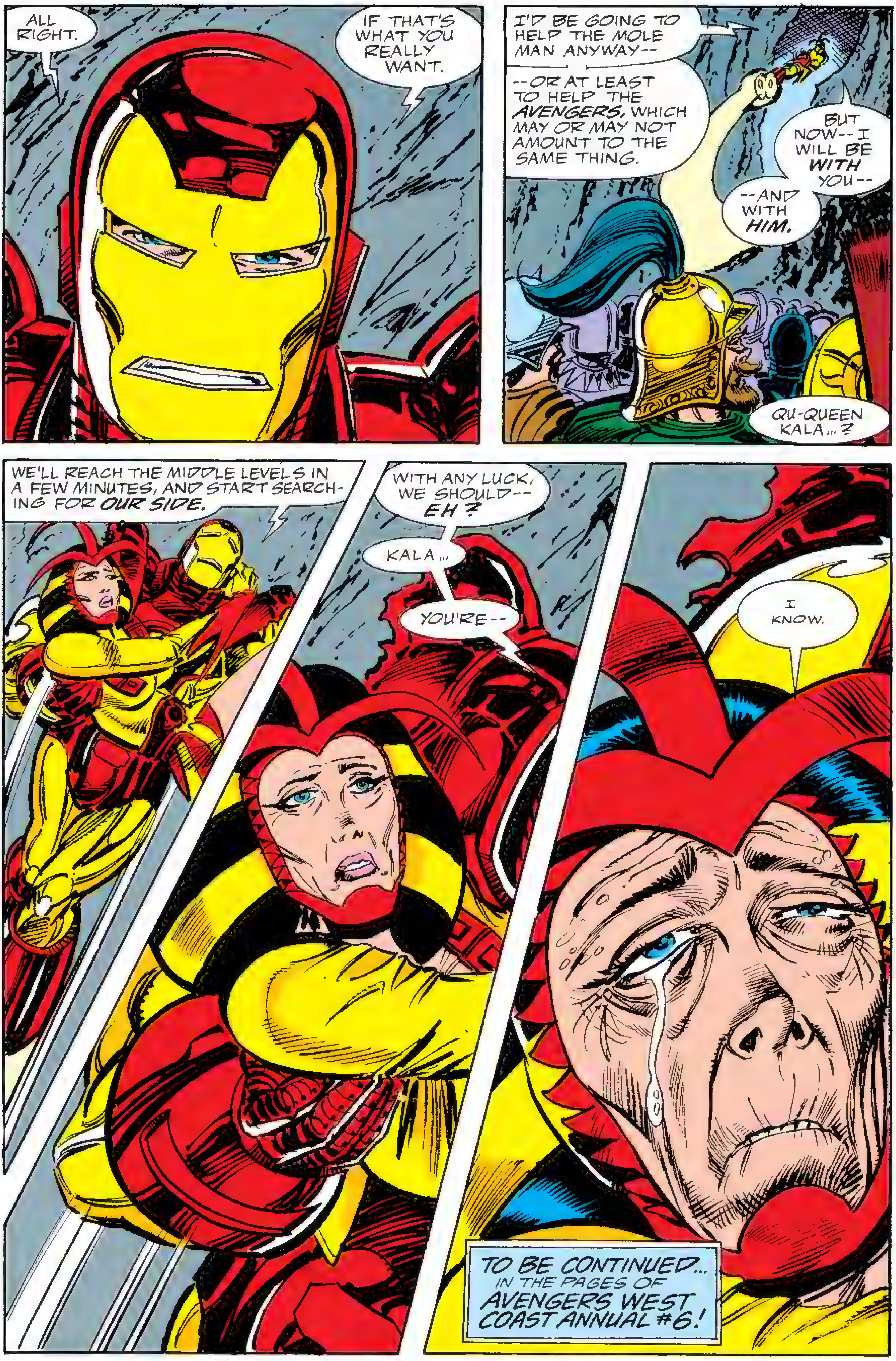

YOU CAN RELAX NOW, KALA.
NONE OF THESE SHOTS WILL GET PAST MY ARMOR TO HURT YOU.
ZIK
ZIK
ZIK
ZIK
ZIK
ZIK
AARRR
WE DO NOT NEED ANYONE TO PROTECT US, EH, LANDSLIDE--
ZZATCH!
--OR PERHAPS WE DO!
I--DID NOT WANT TO DO THIS, DIGGER--WITH COUNTLESS TONS OF EARTH AND ROCK DIRECTLY OVER OUR HEADS--


--BUT THE NETHER-WORLDERS HAVE LEFT ME NO CHOICE!
YES!
YOUR SHOCK WAVE MAKES THE VERY GROUND BEGIN TO TREMBLE--
--TO ROCK AND REEL BENEATH THEIR UNSTEADY FEET--
RRRMMMMMBLLL
--AND THEIR PRECIOUS "IMMORTALITY" WILL PERISH WITH THEM!
OUR CITY--OUR WORLD--IT COLLAPSES ABOUT US!
FLEE! FLEE!
KKKKRRRRAAKKKK
LANDSLIDE'S SHOCK WAVE MUST HAVE CREATED A FAULT IN THE EARTH--AND SET IT OFF--ALL AT ONCE!
THIS QUAKE'S BIG ENOUGH TO DESTROY THE WHOLE NETHERWORLD!
SORRY TO HAVE TO LEAVE YOU, KALA--

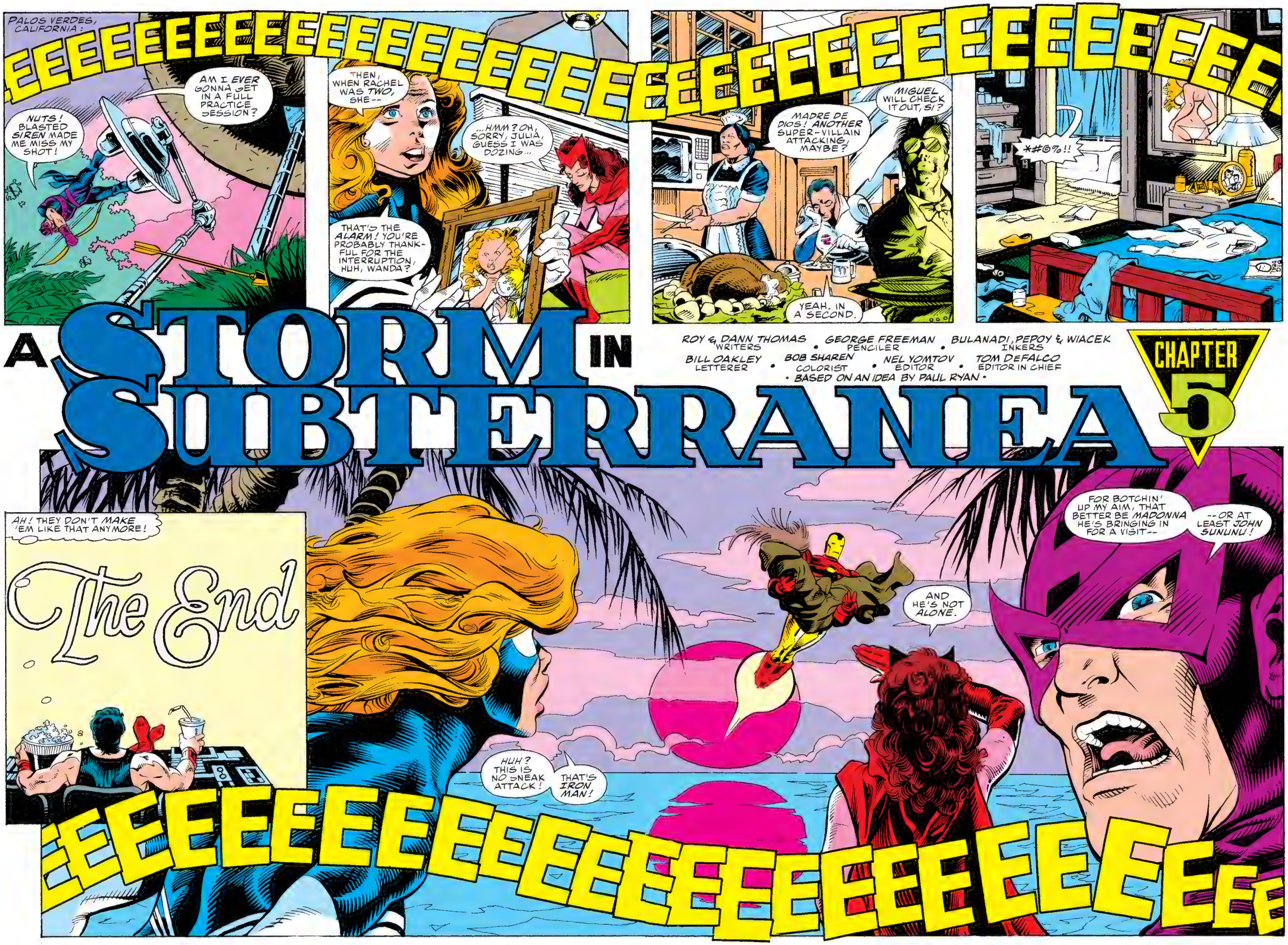

--THERE'S A WHOLE LOTTA SHAKIN' GOING ON UP HERE!
THERE'S THE CREVICE-- PRETTY MUCH IDENTICAL TO THE FAULT LINE THAT LANDSLIDE'S TOUCH CREATED.
IT'S WIDENING BY THE SECOND!
MUCH MORE-- AND THE BREACH IN THE EARTH WILL BE FAR TOO WIDE FOR ANY MANMADE POWER TO HEAL.
I CAN'T SEW IT BACK TOGETHER, LIKE A TAILOR--
BUT MAYBE-- JUST MAYBE--MY REPULSOR RAYS CAN SET UP A COUNTER-BALANCING SHOCK WAVE THAT WILL CANCEL OUT THE RIPPLES FROM LANDSLIDE'S.
I'D HAVE TO HOPE MY SUIT'S BUILT-IN COMPUTERS CAN MEASURE THE PRECISE SEISMIC ACTIVITY BELOW-- ENABLING ME TO DUPLICATE IT EXACTLY-- ALL IN A SPLIT SECOND.
AND YET-- DO I DARE GIVE IT A TRY?
IF THAT DOESN'T WORK, IT'LL SIMPLY HASTEN THE DESTRUCTION OF KALA'S NETHERWORLD.
THEN AGAIN-- WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE IF THESE PEOPLE DIE IN THIRTY SECONDS--
--OR IN TEN?
SHRAKKT!


EVEN ***LANDSLIDE'S*** ROOTING FOR ME!
HE'S AS TERRIFIED AS ANYBODY ELSE!
BUT-- WHAT DO YOU KNOW-- ***I DID IT!***
MY RAYS HAVE ***NEUTRALIZED*** THE EFFECTS OF HIS FIRST SHOCK WAVE--
SHRAKKK
--NOT THAT THAT'LL BRING ANY OF ***THESE*** POOR DEVILS BACK TO LIFE.
A FEW TRIGGER-HAPPY ***TROOPS***-- ONE ***OFFICER***, REALLY-- DECIDED TO SHOOT FIRST AND ASK QUESTIONS ***NEVER***--
LANDSLIDE LASHED OUT WITH THE ***SUPER-POWER*** GIVEN TO HIM BY THE ***MOLE MAN***--
--AND ***THIS*** IS THE RESULT.
MORE PURLOINED ***DEVIANT TECHNOLOGY*** AT WORK.
RHODEY WAS RIGHT...
IT ***IS*** GETTING HARDER AND HARDER TO TELL THE ***BLACK HATS*** FROM THE ***WHITE HATS***, IN ANY GIVEN WAR.
KALA... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
KALA--!
I KNOW.


AND THAT'S NOT ALL...!
HAIL, KALA-- QUEEN OF THE NETHER-WORLD!
APPARENTLY THEY ASSUME YOU BROUGHT *ME* HERE, AS WELL AS THAT PAIR OF *OUTCASTS*...
...AND THEY'D RATHER HAVE YOU *RULE* THEM THAN BE LOOKING FOR *REVENGE* ON THEM...
...EVEN IF LANDSLIDE AND DIGGER HAVE FADED INTO THE EARTH-WORKS.
D-DIGGER, I--I ALMOST--
SHUT UP AND LET'S GET *OUT* OF HERE!
WELL, KALA, YOU GOT *EXACTLY* WHAT YOU MUST HAVE WANTED WHEN YOU GOT THOSE TWO TO BRING YOU HERE.
THE THRONE OF YOUR HOMELAND IS *YOURS* FOR THE TAKING.
BUT--I SHALL *NOT* TAKE IT.
WHAT?
THIS IS *NOT* MY HOME--NOT ANY LONGER.
I WANT TO GO HELP THE *MOLE MAN* NOW--AND I WANT *YOU* TO HELP ME.
BUT SURELY YOU *REALIZE*--
CAN WE *GO* NOW, IRON MAN...
...PLEASE?


ALL RIGHT.
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU REALLY WANT.
I'D BE GOING TO HELP THE MOLE MAN ANYWAY--
--OR AT LEAST TO HELP THE AVENGERS, WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT AMOUNT TO THE SAME THING.
BUT NOW-- I WILL BE WITH YOU--
--AND WITH HIM.
QU-QUEEN KALA...?
WE'LL REACH THE MIDDLE LEVELS IN A FEW MINUTES, AND START SEARCHING FOR OUR SIDE.
WITH ANY LUCK, WE SHOULD-- EH?
KALA...
YOU'RE--
I KNOW.
TO BE CONTINUED... IN THE PAGES OF AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL #6!

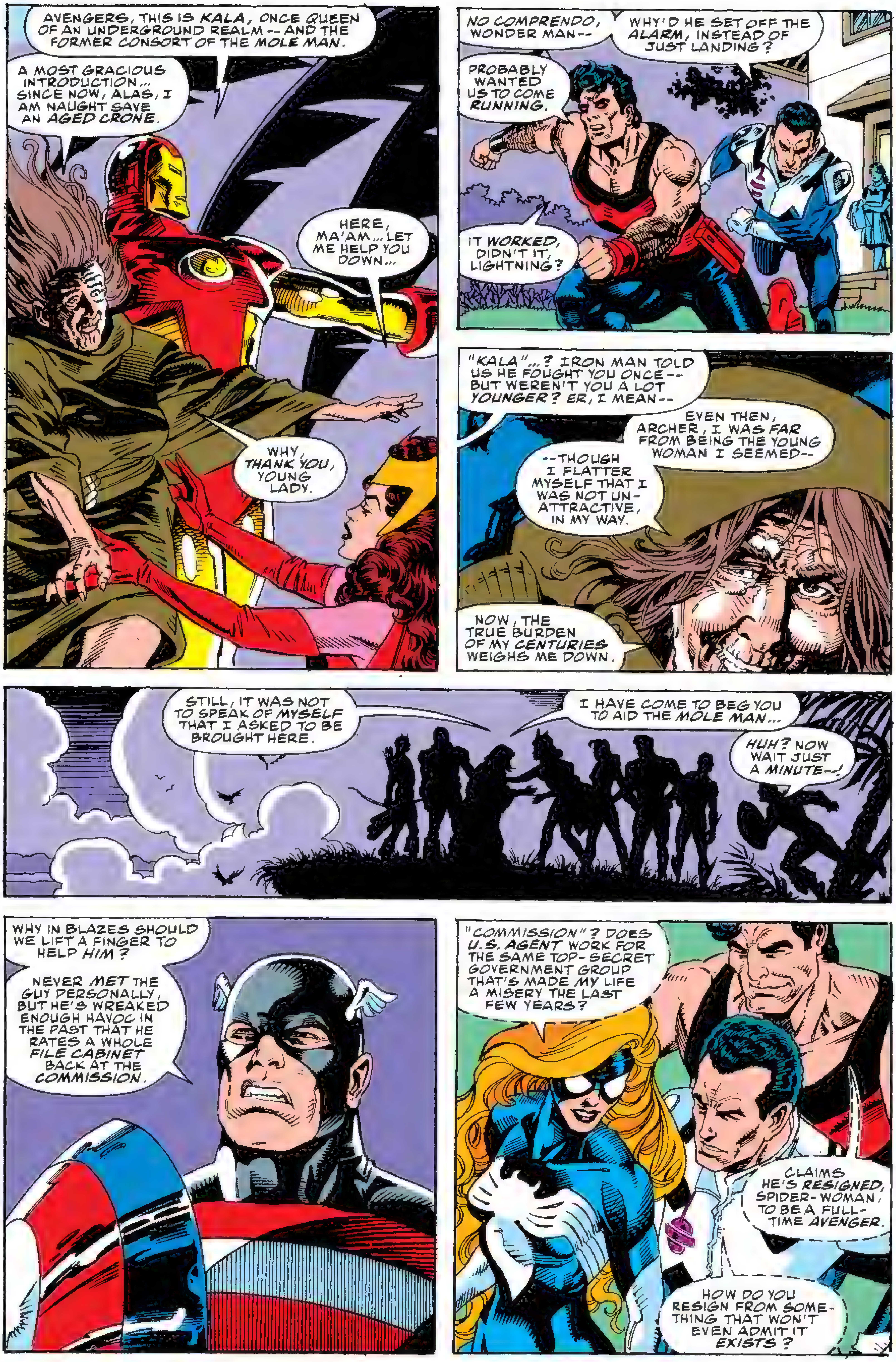
MARVEL® COMICS
ANNUAL
PART 5
SUBTERRANEAN WARS™
64 PAGES
$2.00/$2.45 CAN.
AVENGERS WEST COAST
6◆1991
£1.00 UK
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
AVENGERS WEST COAST™
50 YEARS OF CAPTAIN AMERICA 1941 – 1991
MORGAN
BURIED... ALIVE!

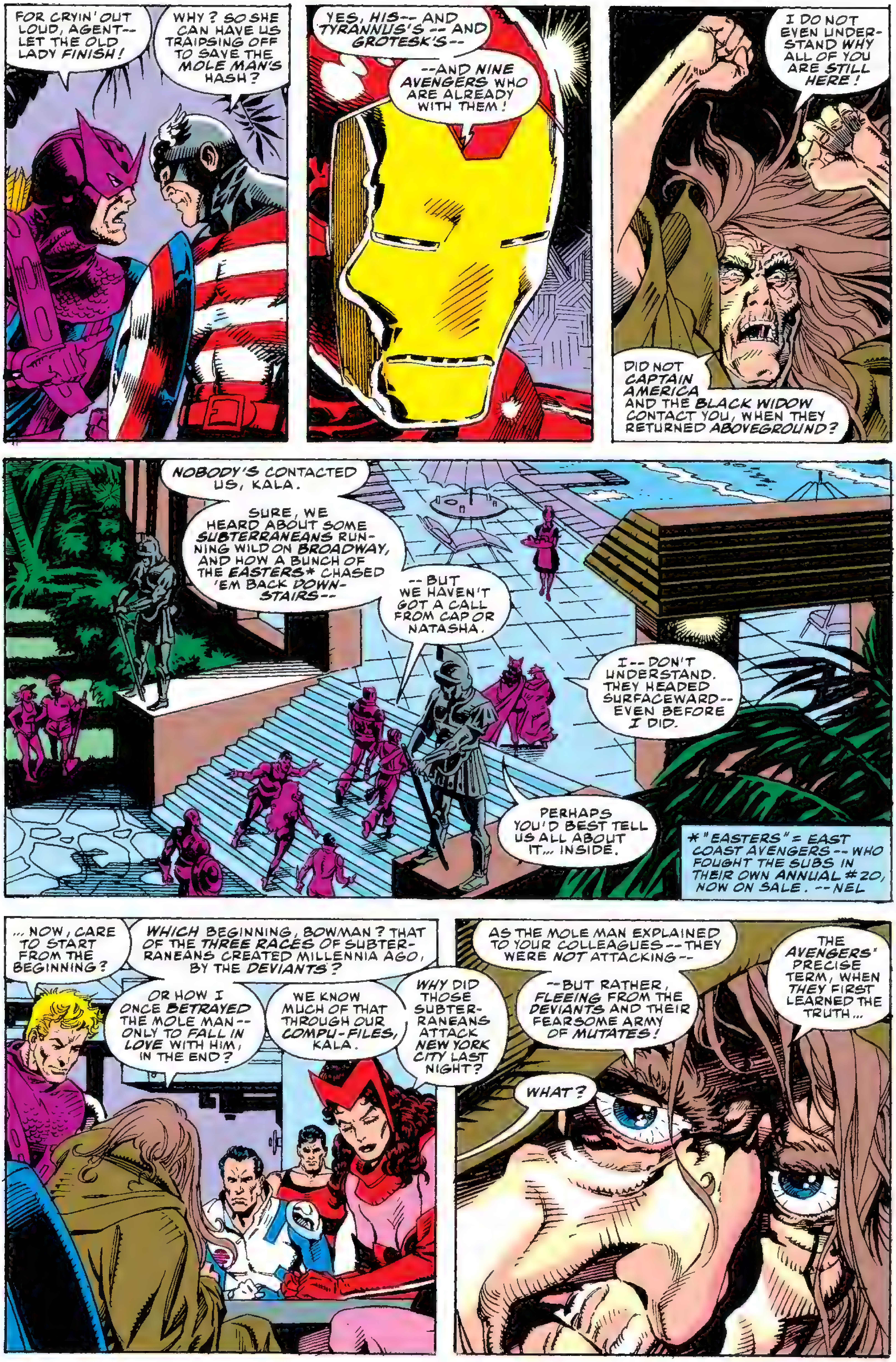

PALOS VERDES, CALIFORNIA:
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
NUTS! BLASTED SIREN MADE ME MISS MY SHOT!
AM I EVER GONNA GET IN A FULL PRACTICE SESSION?
THEN, WHEN RACHEL WAS TWO, SHE--
...HMM? OH, SORRY, JULIA. GUESS I WAS DOZING...
THAT'S THE ALARM! YOU'RE PROBABLY THANKFUL FOR THE INTERRUPTION, HUH, WANDA?
MADRE DE DIOS! ANOTHER SUPER-VILLAIN ATTACKING, MAYBE?
MIGUEL WILL CHECK IT OUT, SI?
YEAH. IN A SECOND.
*#@%!!
AH! THEY DON'T MAKE 'EM LIKE THAT ANYMORE!
The End
FOR BOTCHIN' UP MY AIM, THAT BETTER BE MADONNA HE'S BRINGING IN FOR A VISIT--
--OR AT LEAST JOHN SUNUNU!
AND HE'S NOT ALONE.
HUH? THIS IS NO SNEAK ATTACK!
THAT'S IRON MAN!
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

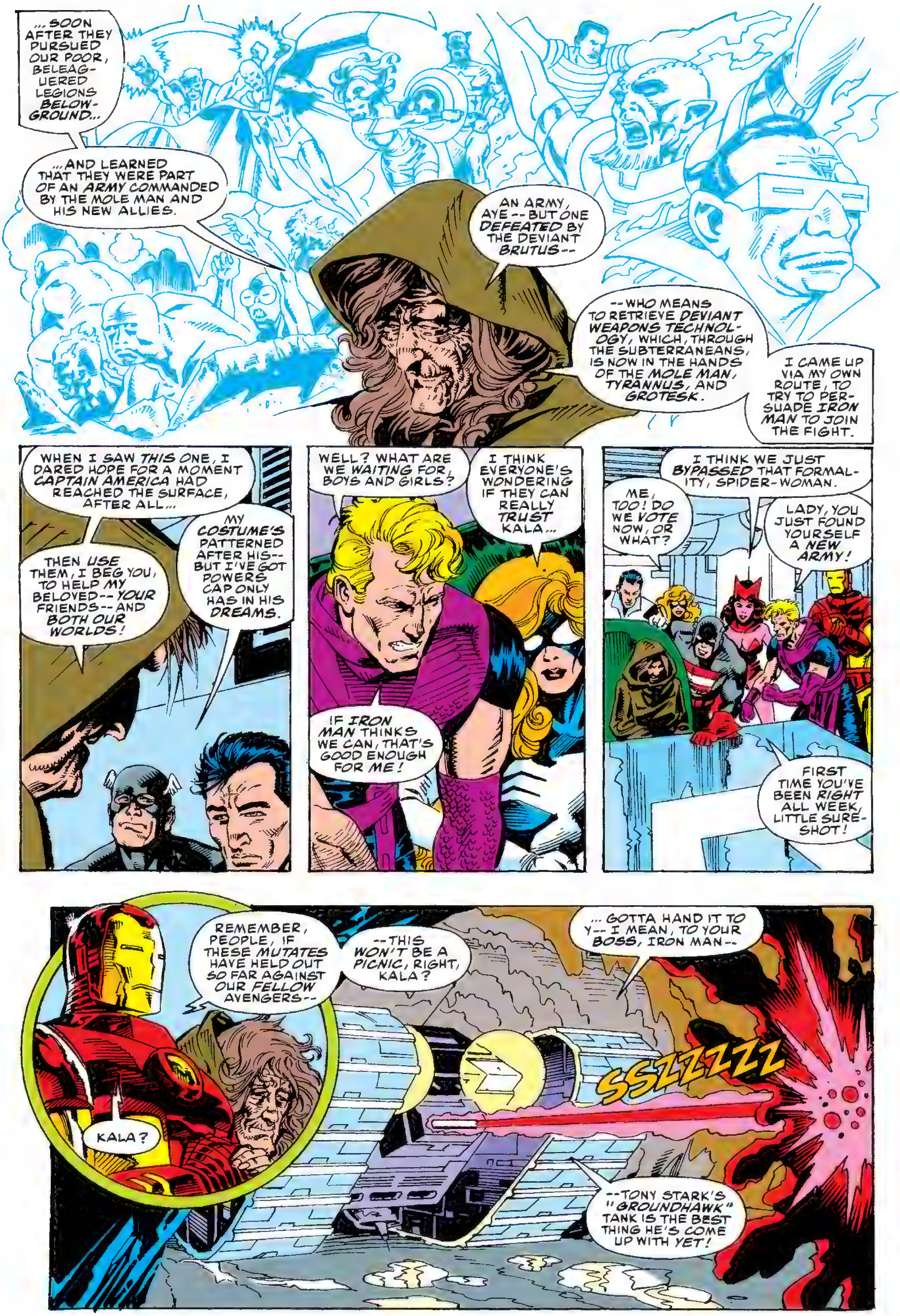
A STORM IN SUBTERRANEA

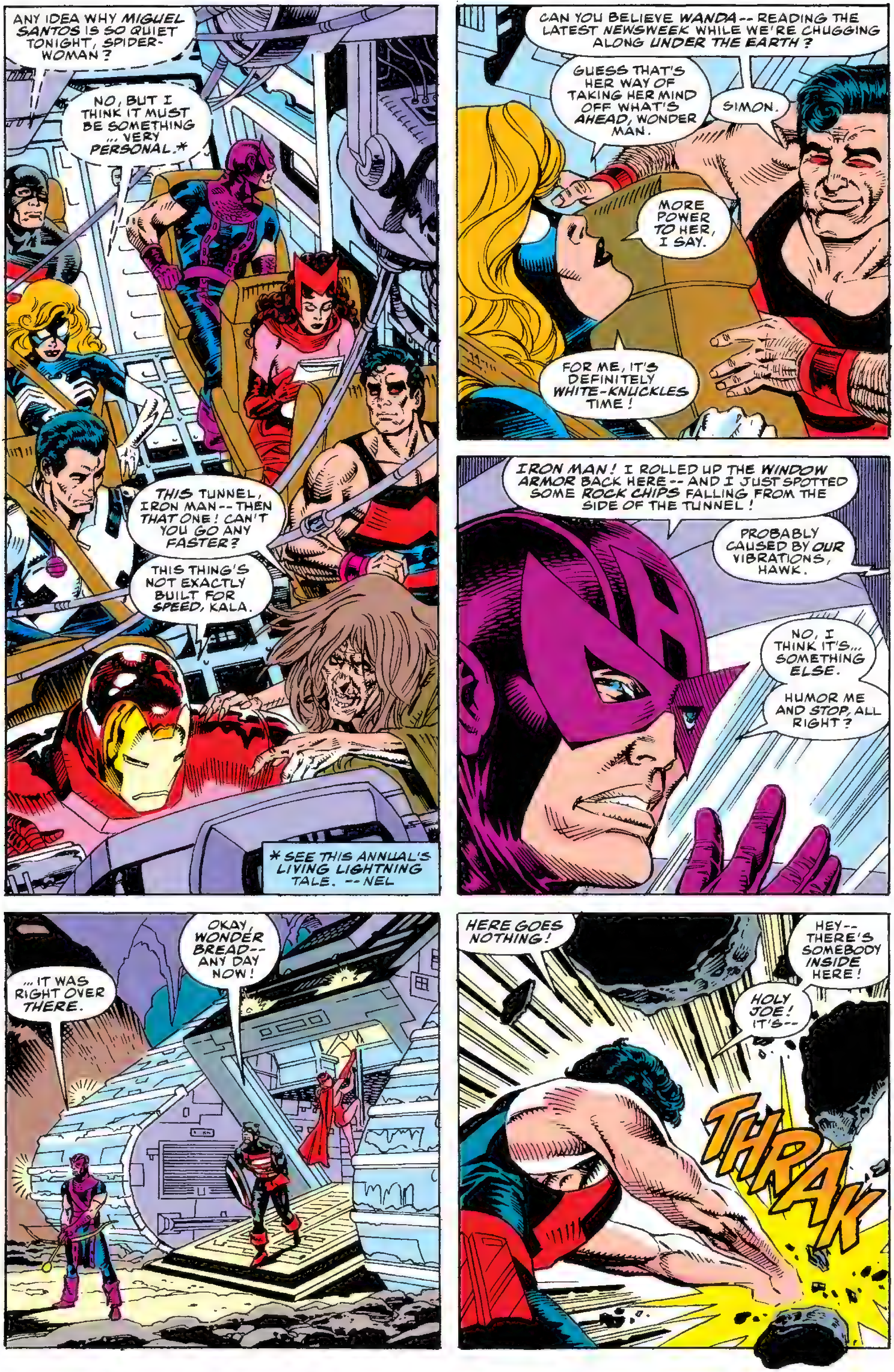
CHAPTER 5

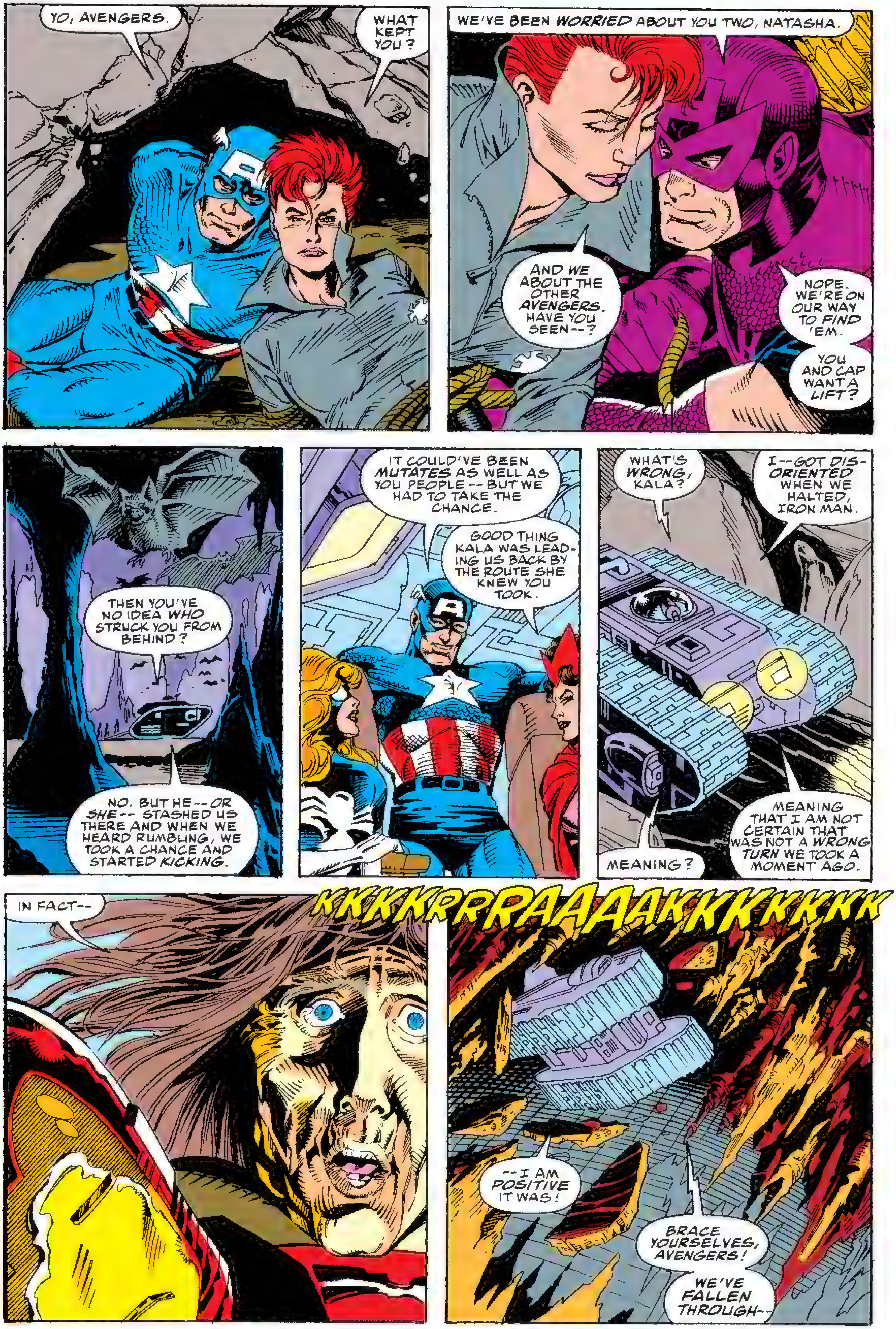
ROY & DANN THOMAS WRITERS • GEORGE FREEMAN PENCILER • BULANADI, PEPOY & WIACEK INKERS
BILL OAKLEY LETTERER • BOB SHAREN COLORIST • NEL YOMTOV EDITOR • TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF
• BASED ON AN IDEA BY PAUL RYAN •

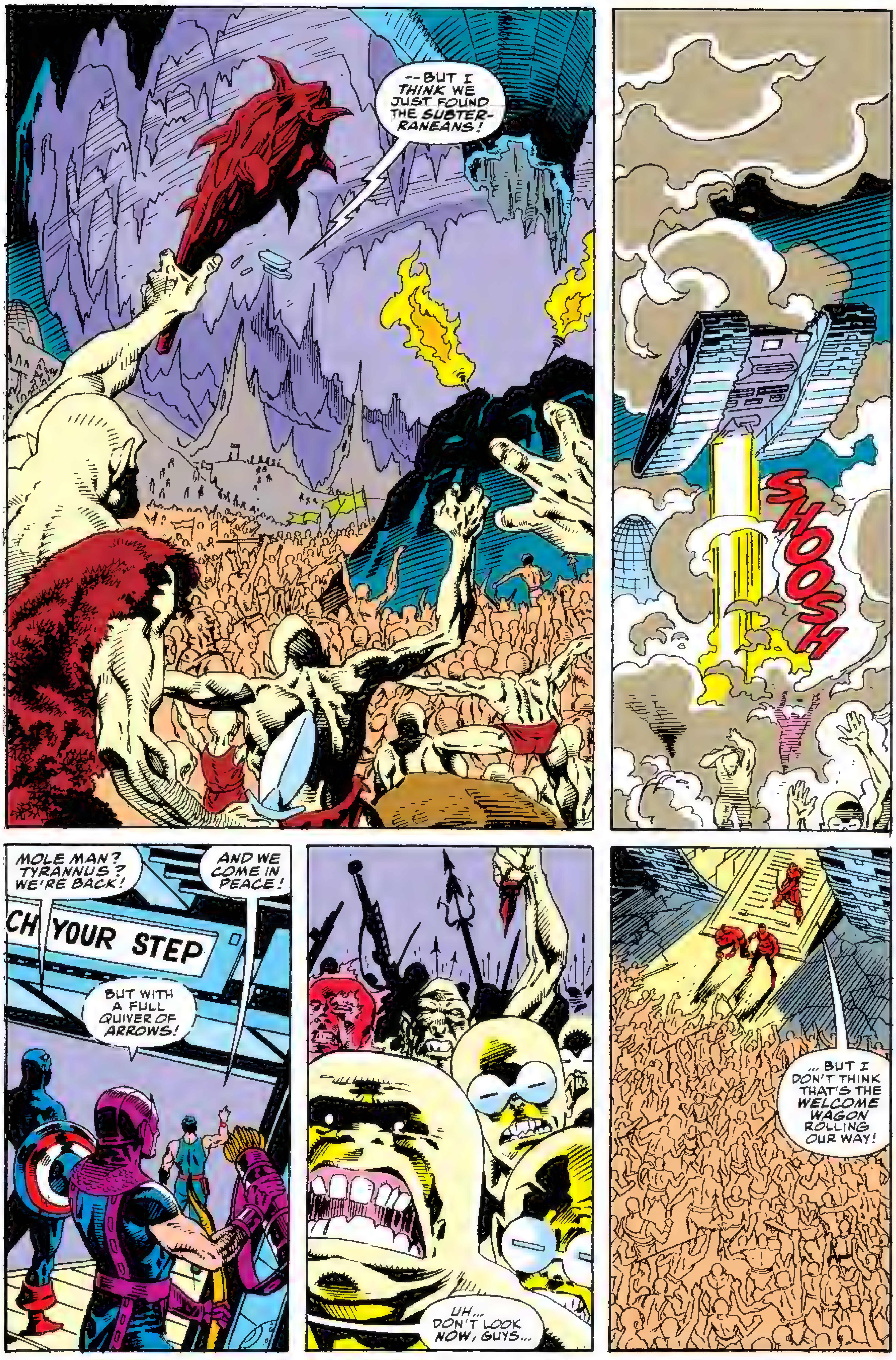

AVENGERS, THIS IS *KALA*, ONCE QUEEN OF AN UNDERGROUND REALM -- AND THE FORMER CONSORT OF THE *MOLE MAN*.
A MOST GRACIOUS INTRODUCTION... SINCE NOW, ALAS, I AM NAUGHT SAVE AN *AGED CRONE*.
HERE, MA'AM... LET ME HELP YOU DOWN...
WHY, *THANK YOU*, YOUNG LADY.
NO COMPRENDO, WONDER MAN--
WHY'D HE SET OFF THE *ALARM*, INSTEAD OF JUST LANDING?
PROBABLY WANTED US TO COME *RUNNING*.
IT *WORKED*, DIDN'T IT, LIGHTNING?
"*KALA*"...? IRON MAN TOLD US HE FOUGHT YOU ONCE -- BUT WEREN'T YOU A LOT *YOUNGER*? ER, I MEAN --
EVEN THEN, ARCHER, I WAS *FAR* FROM BEING THE YOUNG WOMAN I SEEMED--
--THOUGH I FLATTER MYSELF THAT I WAS NOT UNATTRACTIVE, IN MY WAY.
NOW, THE TRUE BURDEN OF MY *CENTURIES* WEIGHS ME DOWN.
STILL, IT WAS NOT TO SPEAK OF *MYSELF* THAT I ASKED TO BE BROUGHT HERE.
I HAVE COME TO BEG YOU TO AID THE *MOLE MAN*...
HUH? NOW WAIT JUST A *MINUTE*--!
WHY IN BLAZES SHOULD WE LIFT A FINGER TO HELP *HIM*?
NEVER *MET* THE GUY PERSONALLY, BUT HE'S WREAKED ENOUGH HAVOC IN THE PAST THAT HE RATES A WHOLE *FILE CABINET* BACK AT THE *COMMISSION*.
"*COMMISSION*"? DOES *U.S. AGENT* WORK FOR THE SAME TOP-SECRET GOVERNMENT GROUP THAT'S MADE *MY* LIFE A MISERY THE LAST FEW YEARS?
CLAIMS HE'S *RESIGNED*, SPIDER-WOMAN, TO BE A FULL-TIME *AVENGER*.
HOW DO YOU RESIGN FROM SOMETHING THAT WON'T EVEN ADMIT IT *EXISTS*?

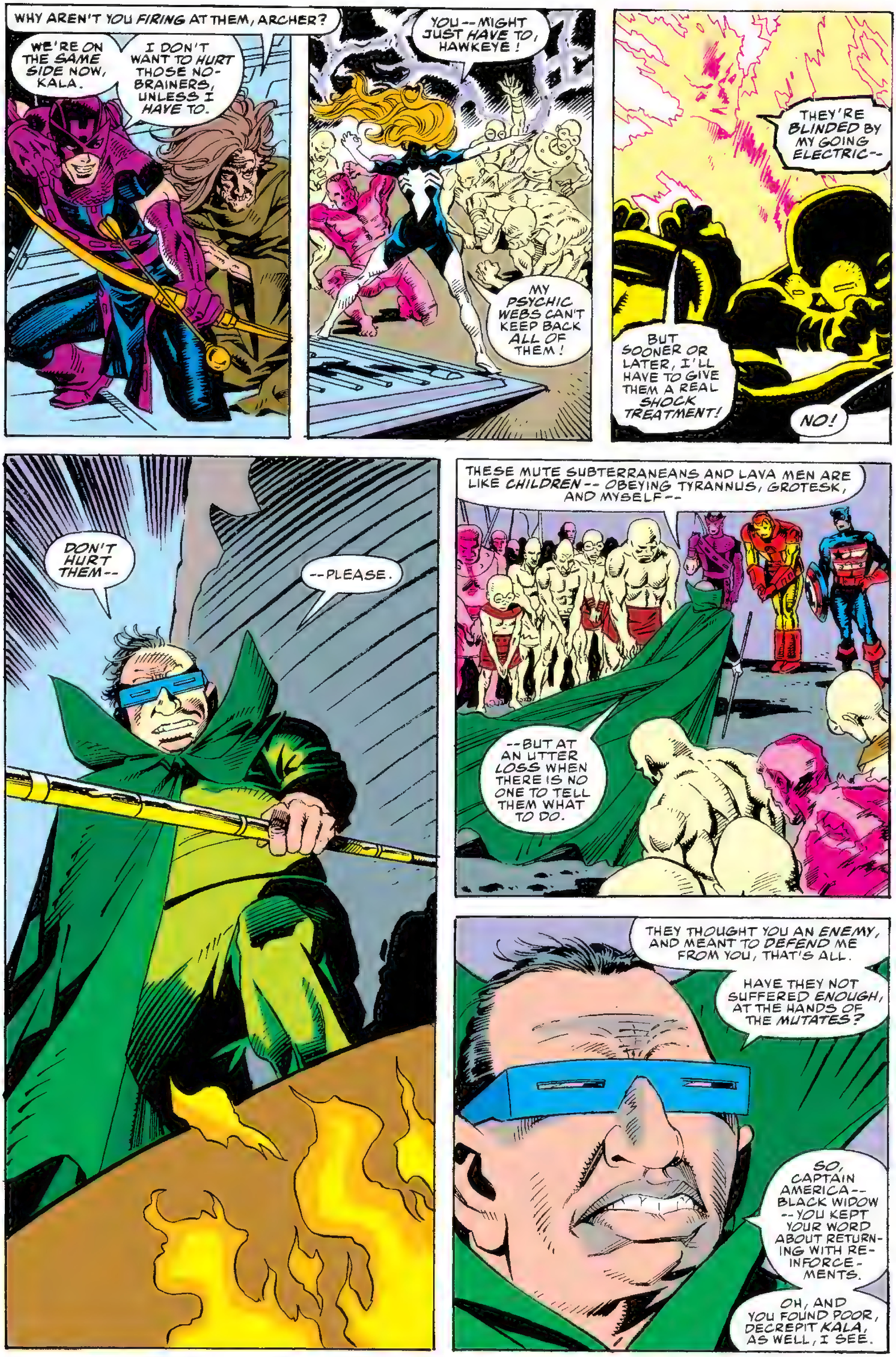

FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD, AGENT-- LET THE OLD LADY FINISH!
WHY? SO SHE CAN HAVE US TRAIPSING OFF TO SAVE THE MOLE MAN'S HASH?
YES, HIS-- AND TYRANNUS'S -- AND GROTESK'S--
--AND NINE AVENGERS WHO ARE ALREADY WITH THEM!
I DO NOT EVEN UNDERSTAND WHY ALL OF YOU ARE STILL HERE!
DID NOT CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE BLACK WIDOW CONTACT YOU, WHEN THEY RETURNED ABOVEGROUND?
NOBODY'S CONTACTED US, KALA.
SURE, WE HEARD ABOUT SOME SUBTERRANEANS RUNNING WILD ON BROADWAY, AND HOW A BUNCH OF THE EASTERS* CHASED 'EM BACK DOWNSTAIRS--
--BUT WE HAVEN'T GOT A CALL FROM CAP OR NATASHA.
I-- DON'T UNDERSTAND. THEY HEADED SURFACEWARD-- EVEN BEFORE I DID.
PERHAPS YOU'D BEST TELL US ALL ABOUT IT... INSIDE.
* "EASTERS" = EAST COAST AVENGERS--WHO FOUGHT THE SUBS IN THEIR OWN ANNUAL #20, NOW ON SALE. --NEL
...NOW, CARE TO START FROM THE BEGINNING?
WHICH BEGINNING, BOWMAN? THAT OF THE THREE RACES OF SUBTERRANEANS CREATED MILLENNIA AGO, BY THE DEVIANTS?
OR HOW I ONCE BETRAYED THE MOLE MAN-- ONLY TO FALL IN LOVE WITH HIM, IN THE END?
WE KNOW MUCH OF THAT THROUGH OUR COMPU-FILES, KALA.
WHY DID THOSE SUBTERRANEANS ATTACK NEW YORK CITY LAST NIGHT?
AS THE MOLE MAN EXPLAINED TO YOUR COLLEAGUES--THEY WERE NOT ATTACKING--
--BUT RATHER, FLEEING FROM THE DEVIANTS AND THEIR FEARSOME ARMY OF MUTATES!
WHAT?
THE AVENGERS' PRECISE TERM, WHEN THEY FIRST LEARNED THE TRUTH...

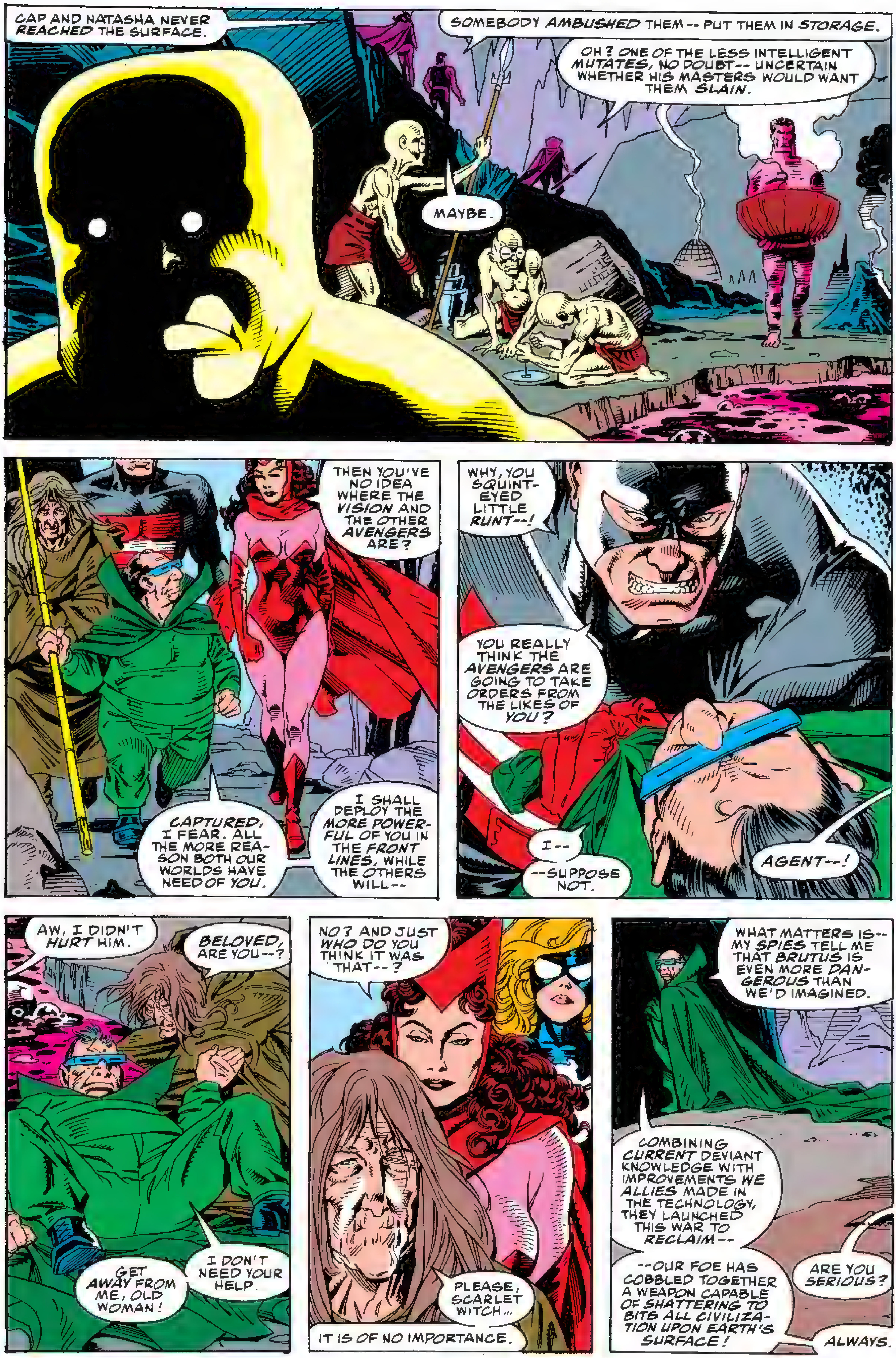

...SOON AFTER THEY PURSUED OUR POOR, BELEAGUERED LEGIONS *BELOW-GROUND*...
...AND LEARNED THAT THEY WERE PART OF AN *ARMY* COMMANDED BY THE MOLE MAN AND HIS NEW ALLIES.
AN ARMY, AYE -- BUT ONE *DEFEATED* BY THE DEVIANT *BRUTUS*--
--WHO MEANS TO RETRIEVE *DEVIANT WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY*, WHICH, THROUGH THE SUBTERRANEANS, IS NOW IN THE HANDS OF THE *MOLE MAN, TYRANNUS*, AND *GROTESK*.
I CAME UP VIA MY OWN ROUTE, TO TRY TO PERSUADE *IRON MAN* TO JOIN THE FIGHT.
WHEN I SAW *THIS* ONE, I DARED HOPE FOR A MOMENT *CAPTAIN AMERICA* HAD REACHED THE SURFACE, AFTER ALL...
THEN *USE* THEM, I BEG YOU, TO HELP *MY* BELOVED-- *YOUR* FRIENDS-- AND *BOTH OUR WORLDS!*
MY *COSTUME'S* PATTERNED AFTER HIS-- BUT I'VE GOT *POWERS* CAP ONLY HAS IN HIS *DREAMS*.
WELL? WHAT ARE WE *WAITING* FOR, BOYS AND GIRLS?
I THINK EVERYONE'S WONDERING IF THEY CAN REALLY *TRUST* KALA...
IF *IRON MAN* THINKS WE CAN, THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR *ME!*
I THINK WE JUST *BYPASSED* THAT FORMALITY, SPIDER-WOMAN.
ME, TOO! DO WE *VOTE* NOW, OR WHAT?
LADY, YOU JUST FOUND YOURSELF A *NEW ARMY!*
FIRST TIME YOU'VE BEEN *RIGHT* ALL WEEK, LITTLE SURE-SHOT!
REMEMBER, PEOPLE, IF THESE *MUTATES* HAVE HELD OUT SO FAR AGAINST OUR FELLOW AVENGERS--
--THIS *WON'T* BE A *PICNIC*, RIGHT, KALA?
KALA?
...GOTTA HAND IT TO Y-- I MEAN, TO YOUR *BOSS*, IRON MAN--
SSZZZZZ
--TONY STARK'S "*GROUNDHAWK*" TANK IS THE BEST THING HE'S COME UP WITH *YET!*

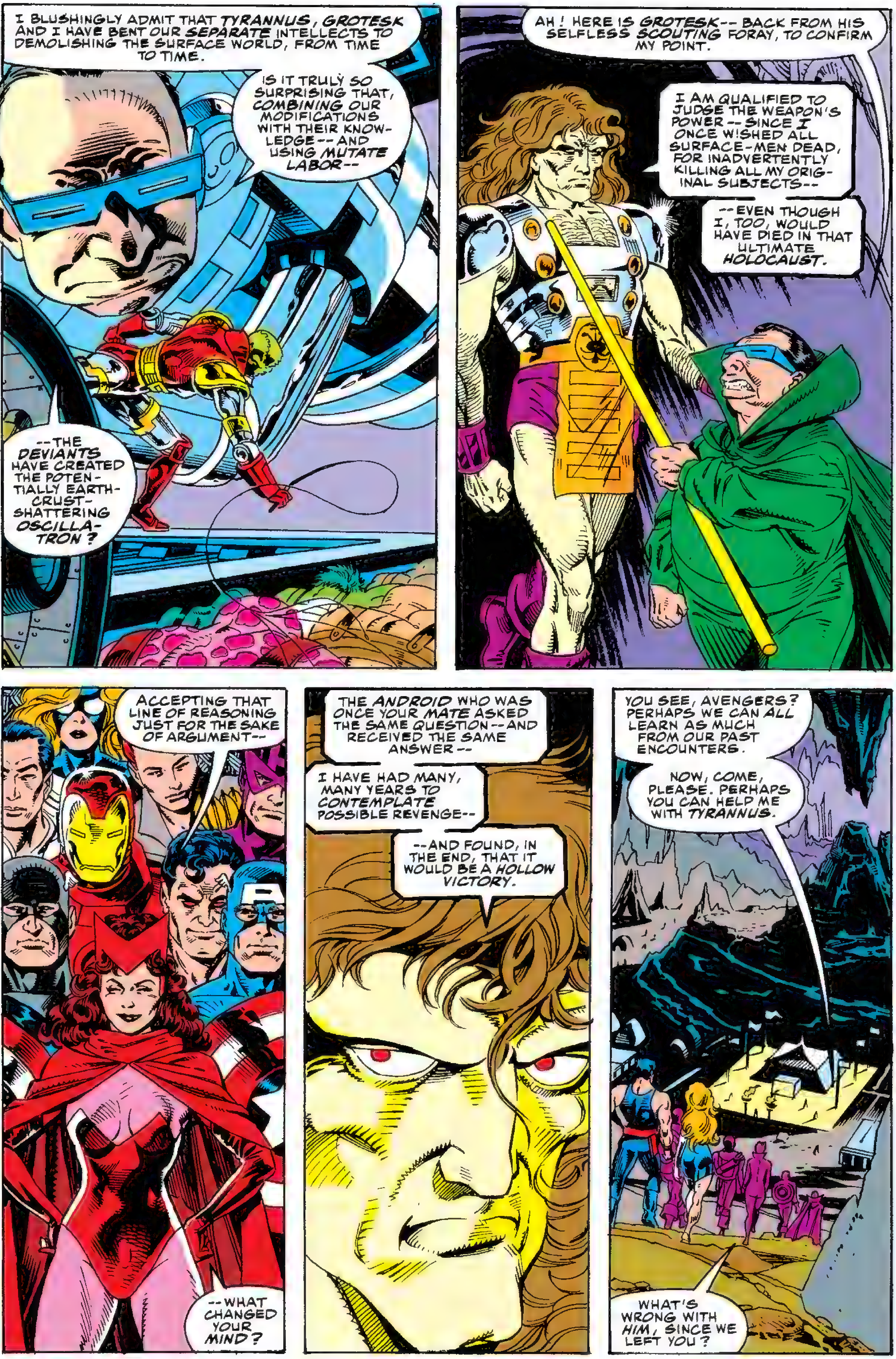

ANY IDEA WHY MIGUEL SANTOS IS SO QUIET TONIGHT, SPIDER-WOMAN?
NO, BUT I THINK IT MUST BE SOMETHING ... VERY PERSONAL.*
THIS TUNNEL, IRON MAN -- THEN THAT ONE! CAN'T YOU GO ANY FASTER?
THIS THING'S NOT EXACTLY BUILT FOR SPEED, KALA.
* SEE THIS ANNUAL'S LIVING LIGHTNING TALE. --NEL
CAN YOU BELIEVE WANDA -- READING THE LATEST NEWSWEEK WHILE WE'RE CHUGGING ALONG UNDER THE EARTH?
GUESS THAT'S HER WAY OF TAKING HER MIND OFF WHAT'S AHEAD, WONDER MAN.
SIMON.
MORE POWER TO HER, I SAY.
FOR ME, IT'S DEFINITELY WHITE-KNUCKLES TIME!
IRON MAN! I ROLLED UP THE WINDOW ARMOR BACK HERE -- AND I JUST SPOTTED SOME ROCK CHIPS FALLING FROM THE SIDE OF THE TUNNEL!
PROBABLY CAUSED BY OUR VIBRATIONS, HAWK.
NO, I THINK IT'S... SOMETHING ELSE.
HUMOR ME AND STOP, ALL RIGHT?
... IT WAS RIGHT OVER THERE.
OKAY, WONDER BREAD -- ANY DAY NOW!
HERE GOES NOTHING!
HEY -- THERE'S SOMEBODY INSIDE HERE!
HOLY JOE! IT'S --
THRAK

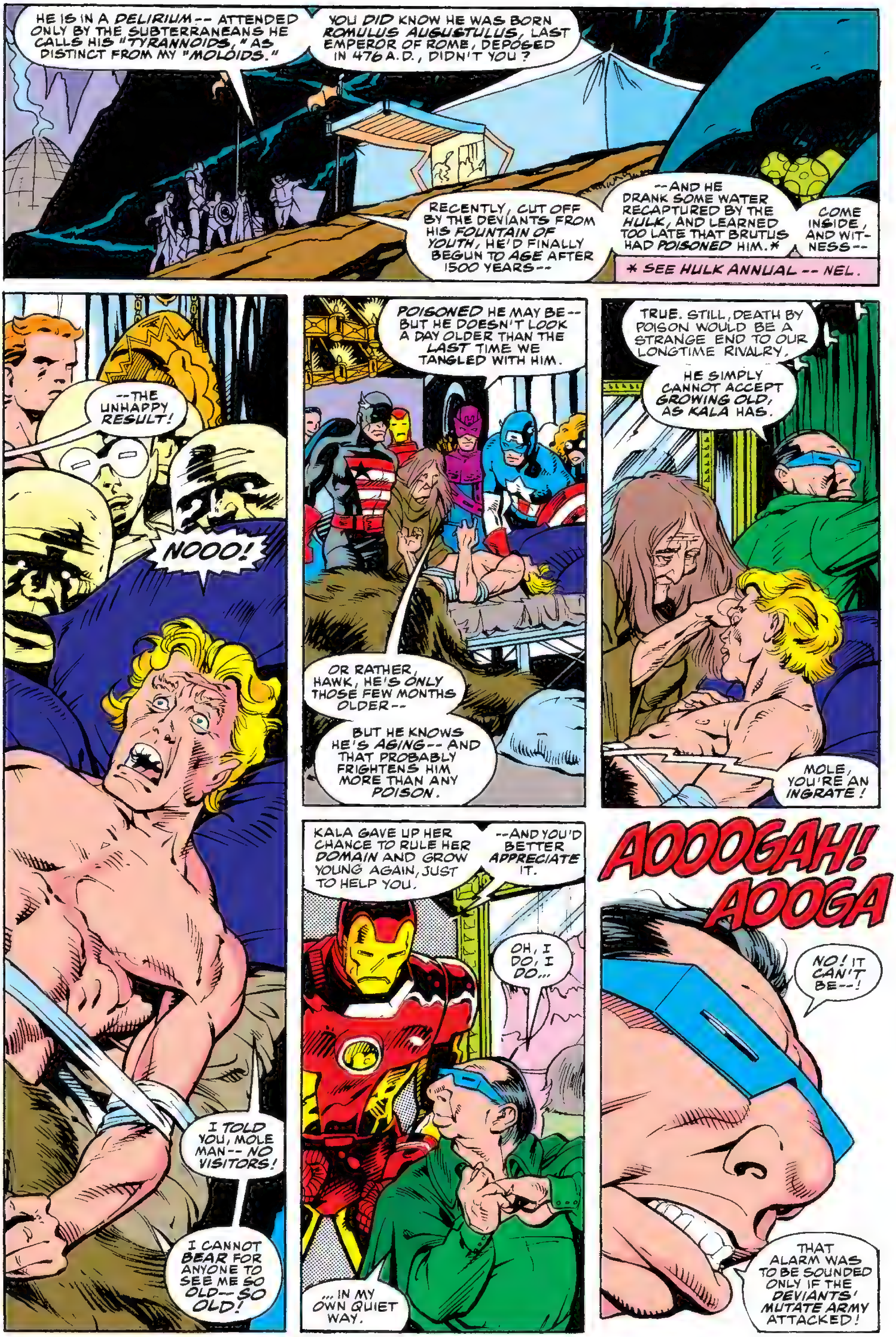

YO, AVENGERS.
WHAT KEPT YOU?
WE'VE BEEN *WORRIED* ABOUT YOU TWO, NATASHA.
AND *WE* ABOUT THE OTHER *AVENGERS*. HAVE YOU SEEN--?
NOPE. WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO *FIND* 'EM.
YOU AND CAP WANT A *LIFT*?
THEN YOU'VE NO IDEA *WHO* STRUCK YOU FROM BEHIND?
NO. BUT HE--OR *SHE*--STASHED US THERE AND WHEN WE HEARD RUMBLING, WE TOOK A CHANCE AND STARTED *KICKING*.
IT COULD'VE BEEN *MUTATES* AS WELL AS YOU PEOPLE--BUT WE HAD TO TAKE THE CHANCE.
GOOD THING KALA WAS LEADING US BACK BY THE ROUTE SHE KNEW YOU TOOK.
WHAT'S *WRONG*, KALA?
I--GOT *DISORIENTED* WHEN WE HALTED, IRON MAN.
MEANING?
MEANING THAT I AM NOT CERTAIN THAT WAS NOT A *WRONG TURN* WE TOOK A MOMENT AGO.
IN FACT--
KKKKRRRAAAAKKKKKKK
--I AM *POSITIVE* IT WAS!
BRACE YOURSELVES, AVENGERS!
WE'VE *FALLEN THROUGH*--

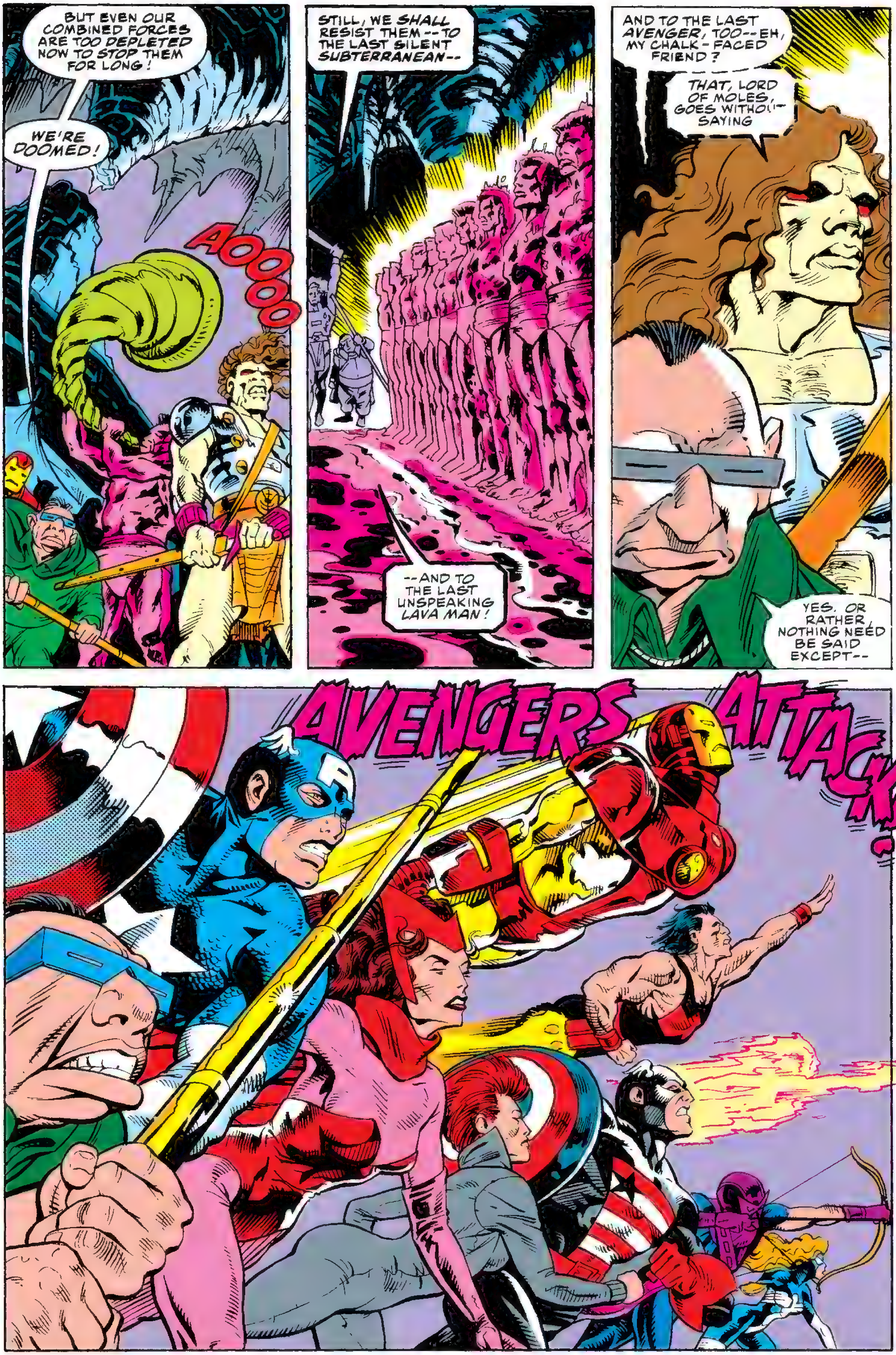

--BUT I *THINK* WE JUST FOUND THE *SUBTERRANEANS!*
SHOOSH
MOLE MAN? TYRANNUS? WE'RE BACK!
AND WE COME IN PEACE!
CH YOUR STEP
BUT WITH A FULL QUIVER OF ARROWS!
UH... DON'T LOOK NOW, GUYS...
...BUT I DON'T THINK THAT'S THE *WELCOME WAGON* ROLLING OUR WAY!

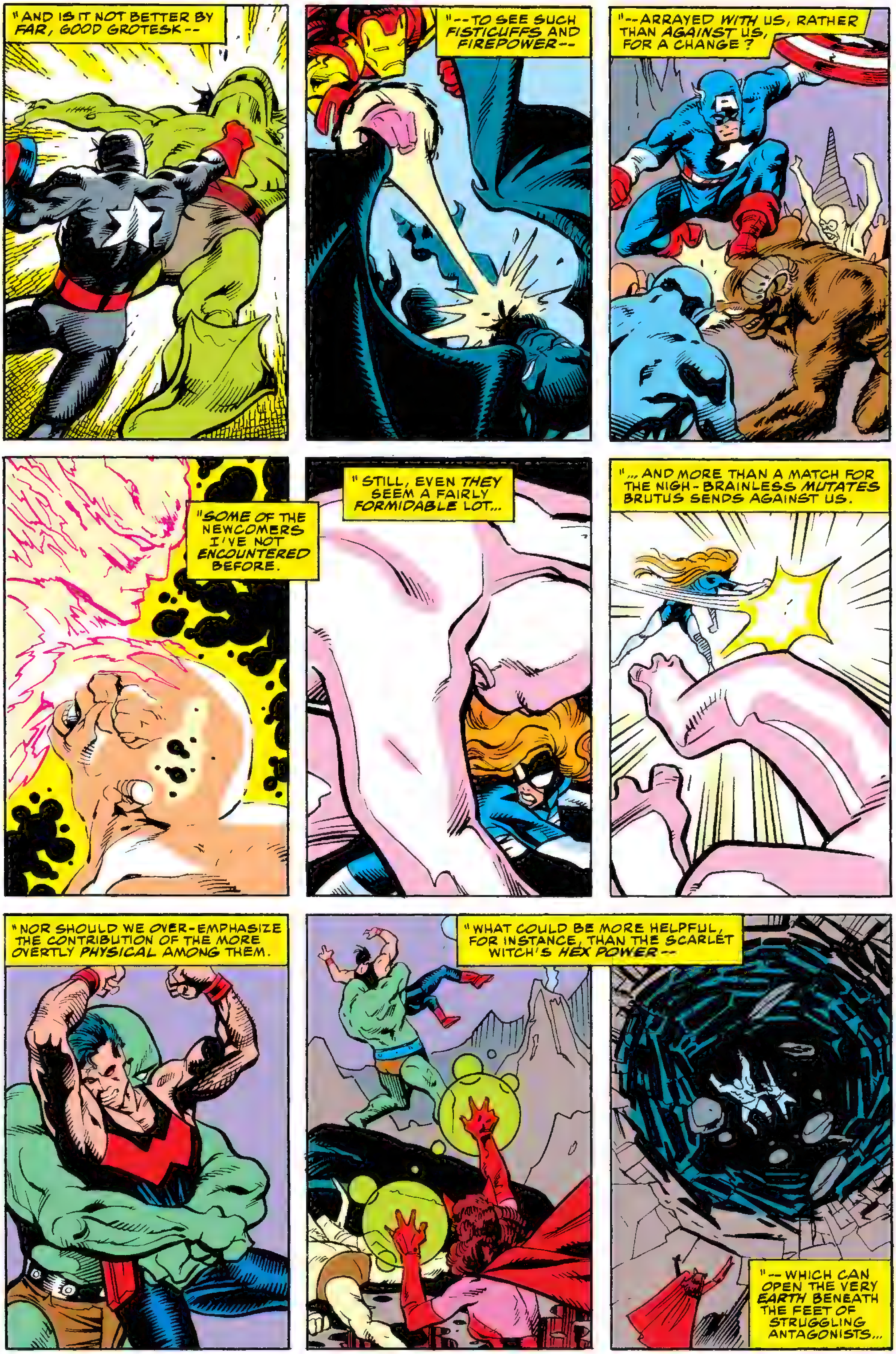

WHY AREN'T YOU *FIRING* AT THEM, ARCHER?
WE'RE ON THE *SAME SIDE* NOW, KALA.
I DON'T WANT TO *HURT* THOSE NO-BRAINERS, UNLESS I *HAVE* TO.
YOU--MIGHT JUST *HAVE* TO, HAWKEYE!
MY *PSYCHIC WEBS* CAN'T KEEP BACK *ALL* OF THEM!
THEY'RE *BLINDED* BY MY GOING *ELECTRIC*--
BUT SOONER OR LATER, I'LL HAVE TO GIVE THEM A REAL *SHOCK TREATMENT!*
NO!
DON'T HURT THEM--
--PLEASE.
THESE MUTE SUBTERRANEANS AND LAVA MEN ARE LIKE *CHILDREN*-- OBEYING TYRANNUS, GROTESK, AND MYSELF--
--BUT AT AN UTTER *LOSS* WHEN THERE IS NO ONE TO TELL THEM WHAT TO DO.
THEY THOUGHT YOU AN *ENEMY*, AND MEANT TO *DEFEND* ME FROM YOU, THAT'S ALL.
HAVE THEY NOT SUFFERED *ENOUGH*, AT THE HANDS OF THE *MUTATES?*
SO, CAPTAIN AMERICA--BLACK WIDOW--YOU KEPT YOUR WORD ABOUT RETURNING WITH REINFORCEMENTS.
OH, AND YOU FOUND POOR, DECREPIT *KALA*, AS WELL, I SEE.

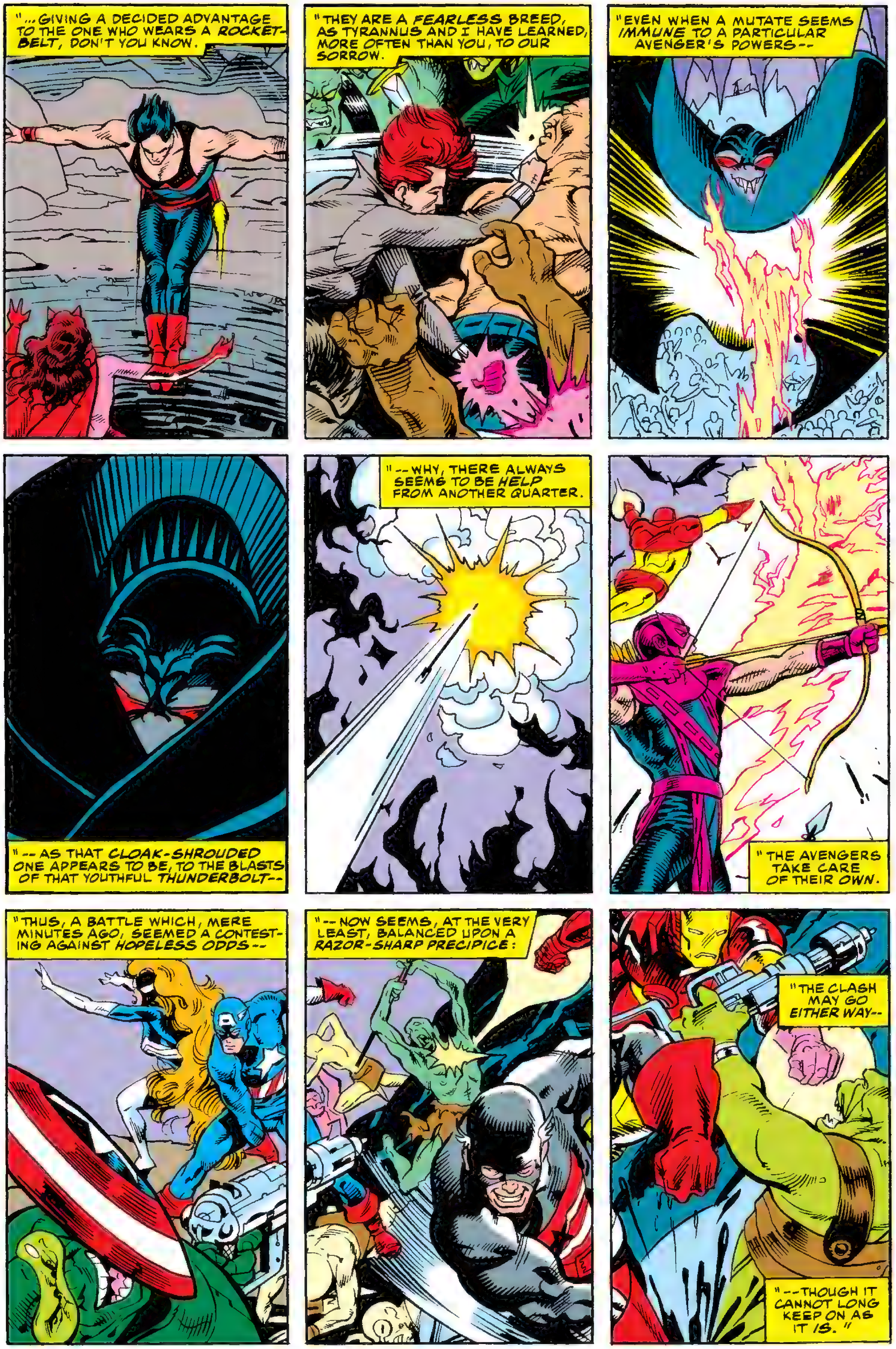

CAP AND NATASHA NEVER REACHED THE SURFACE.
SOMEBODY AMBUSHED THEM -- PUT THEM IN STORAGE.
OH? ONE OF THE LESS INTELLIGENT MUTATES, NO DOUBT-- UNCERTAIN WHETHER HIS MASTERS WOULD WANT THEM SLAIN.
MAYBE.
THEN YOU'VE NO IDEA WHERE THE VISION AND THE OTHER AVENGERS ARE?
CAPTURED, I FEAR. ALL THE MORE REASON BOTH OUR WORLDS HAVE NEED OF YOU.
I SHALL DEPLOY THE MORE POWERFUL OF YOU IN THE FRONT LINES, WHILE THE OTHERS WILL--
WHY, YOU SQUINT-EYED LITTLE RUNT--!
YOU REALLY THINK THE AVENGERS ARE GOING TO TAKE ORDERS FROM THE LIKES OF YOU?
I--
--SUPPOSE NOT.
AGENT--!
AW, I DIDN'T HURT HIM.
BELOVED, ARE YOU--?
I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP.
GET AWAY FROM ME, OLD WOMAN!
NO? AND JUST WHO DO YOU THINK IT WAS THAT--?
PLEASE, SCARLET WITCH...
IT IS OF NO IMPORTANCE.
WHAT MATTERS IS-- MY SPIES TELL ME THAT BRUTUS IS EVEN MORE DANGEROUS THAN WE'D IMAGINED.
COMBINING CURRENT DEVIANT KNOWLEDGE WITH IMPROVEMENTS WE ALLIES MADE IN THE TECHNOLOGY, THEY LAUNCHED THIS WAR TO RECLAIM--
--OUR FOE HAS COBBLED TOGETHER A WEAPON CAPABLE OF SHATTERING TO BITS ALL CIVILIZATION UPON EARTH'S SURFACE!
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
ALWAYS.

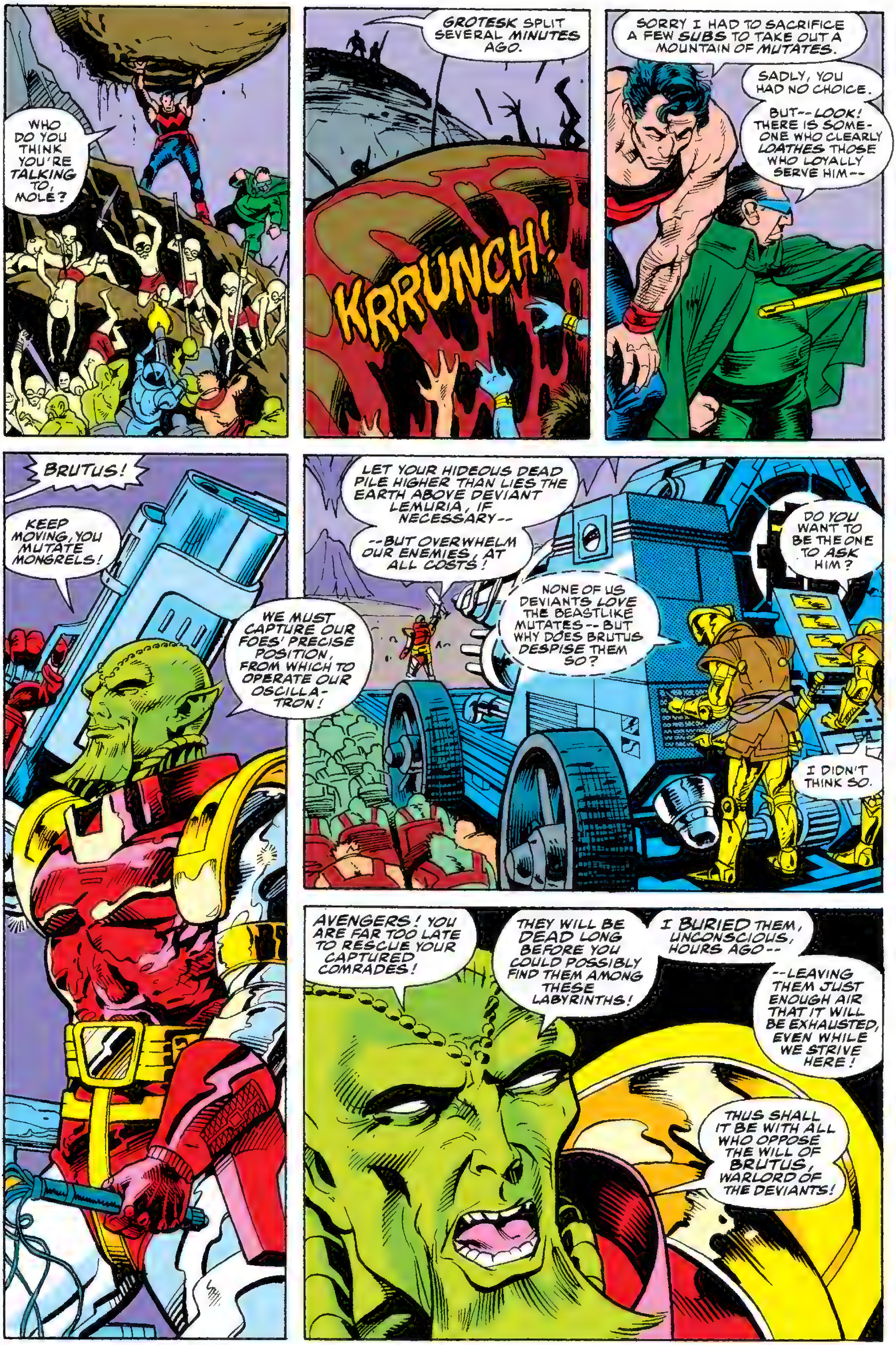

I BLUSHINGLY ADMIT THAT TYRANNUS, GROTESK AND I HAVE BENT OUR SEPARATE INTELLECTS TO DEMOLISHING THE SURFACE WORLD, FROM TIME TO TIME.
IS IT TRULY SO SURPRISING THAT, COMBINING OUR MODIFICATIONS WITH THEIR KNOWLEDGE--AND USING MUTATE LABOR--
--THE DEVIANTS HAVE CREATED THE POTENTIALLY EARTH-CRUST-SHATTERING OSCILLATRON?
AH! HERE IS GROTESK--BACK FROM HIS SELFLESS SCOUTING FORAY, TO CONFIRM MY POINT.
I AM QUALIFIED TO JUDGE THE WEAPON'S POWER--SINCE I ONCE WISHED ALL SURFACE-MEN DEAD, FOR INADVERTENTLY KILLING ALL MY ORIGINAL SUBJECTS--
--EVEN THOUGH I, TOO, WOULD HAVE DIED IN THAT ULTIMATE HOLOCAUST.
ACCEPTING THAT LINE OF REASONING JUST FOR THE SAKE OF ARGUMENT--
--WHAT CHANGED YOUR MIND?
THE ANDROID WHO WAS ONCE YOUR MATE ASKED THE SAME QUESTION--AND RECEIVED THE SAME ANSWER--
I HAVE HAD MANY, MANY YEARS TO CONTEMPLATE POSSIBLE REVENGE--
--AND FOUND, IN THE END, THAT IT WOULD BE A HOLLOW VICTORY.
YOU SEE, AVENGERS? PERHAPS WE CAN ALL LEARN AS MUCH FROM OUR PAST ENCOUNTERS.
NOW, COME, PLEASE. PERHAPS YOU CAN HELP ME WITH TYRANNUS.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM, SINCE WE LEFT YOU?

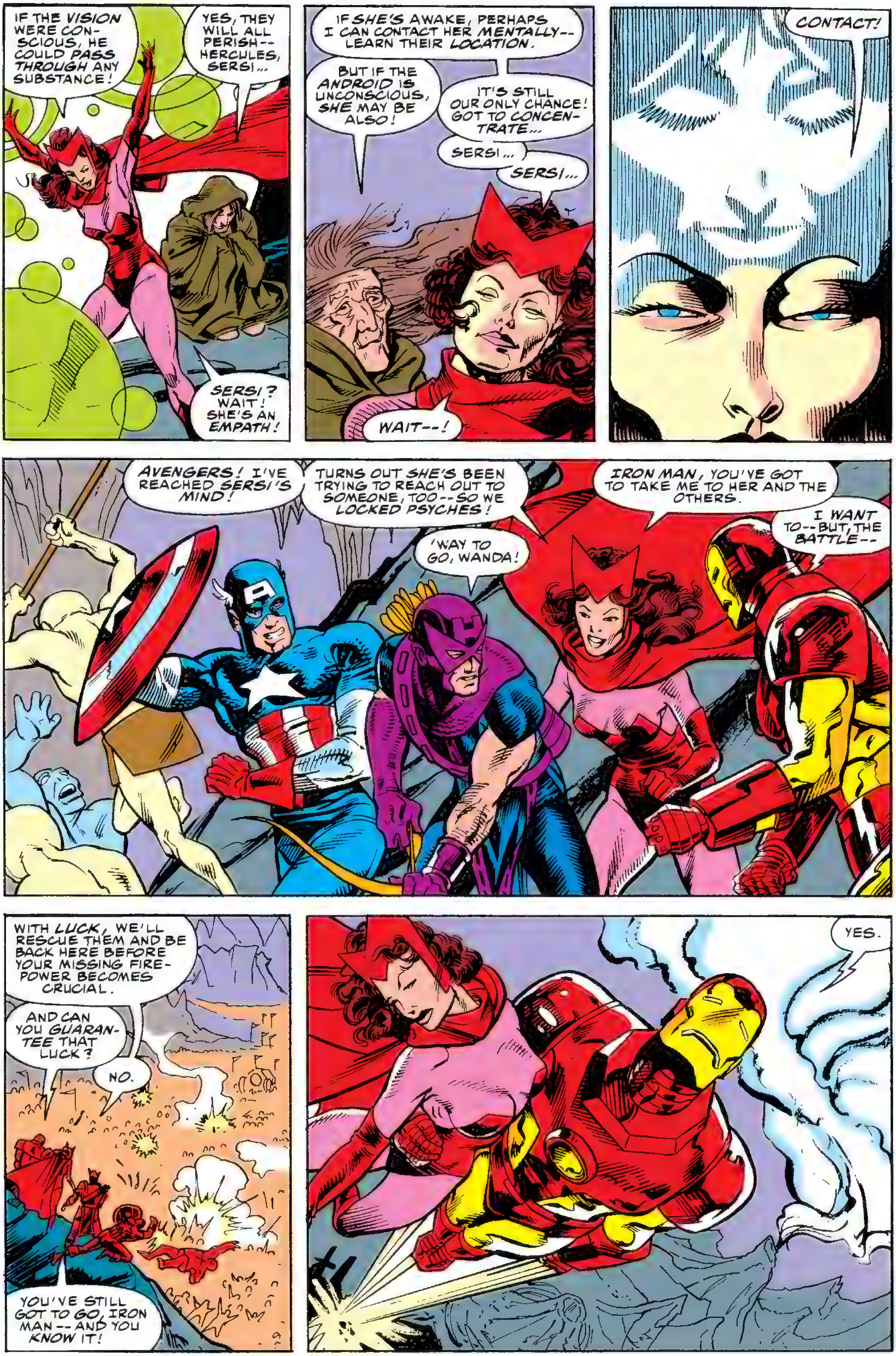

HE IS IN A *DELIRIUM*-- ATTENDED ONLY BY THE SUBTERRANEANS HE CALLS HIS "*TYRANNOIDS*," AS DISTINCT FROM MY "*MOLOIDS*."
YOU *DID* KNOW HE WAS BORN *ROMULUS AUGUSTULUS*, LAST EMPEROR OF ROME, DEPOSED IN 476 A.D., DIDN'T YOU?
RECENTLY, CUT OFF BY THE DEVIANTS FROM HIS *FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH*, HE'D FINALLY BEGUN TO *AGE* AFTER 1500 YEARS--
--AND HE DRANK SOME WATER RECAPTURED BY THE *HULK*, AND LEARNED TOO LATE THAT BRUTUS HAD *POISONED* HIM.*
COME INSIDE, AND WITNESS--
* SEE HULK ANNUAL -- NEL.
--THE *UNHAPPY RESULT*!
NOOO!
I TOLD YOU, MOLE MAN-- NO VISITORS!
I CANNOT *BEAR* FOR ANYONE TO SEE ME SO *OLD*-- SO *OLD*!
POISONED HE MAY BE-- BUT HE *DOESN'T* LOOK A DAY OLDER THAN THE *LAST* TIME WE TANGLED WITH HIM.
OR RATHER, HAWK, HE'S *ONLY* THOSE FEW MONTHS OLDER--
BUT HE KNOWS HE'S *AGING*-- AND THAT PROBABLY FRIGHTENS HIM MORE THAN ANY *POISON*.
TRUE. STILL, DEATH BY POISON WOULD BE A STRANGE END TO OUR LONGTIME RIVALRY.
HE SIMPLY CANNOT ACCEPT *GROWING OLD*, AS *KALA* HAS.
MOLE, YOU'RE AN *INGRATE*!
KALA GAVE UP HER CHANCE TO RULE HER *DOMAIN* AND GROW YOUNG AGAIN, JUST TO HELP YOU.
--AND YOU'D BETTER *APPRECIATE* IT.
OH, I DO, I DO...
...IN MY OWN QUIET WAY.
AOOOGAH! AOOGA
NO! IT CAN'T BE--!
THAT ALARM WAS TO BE SOUNDED ONLY IF THE *DEVIANTS' MUTATE ARMY* ATTACKED!

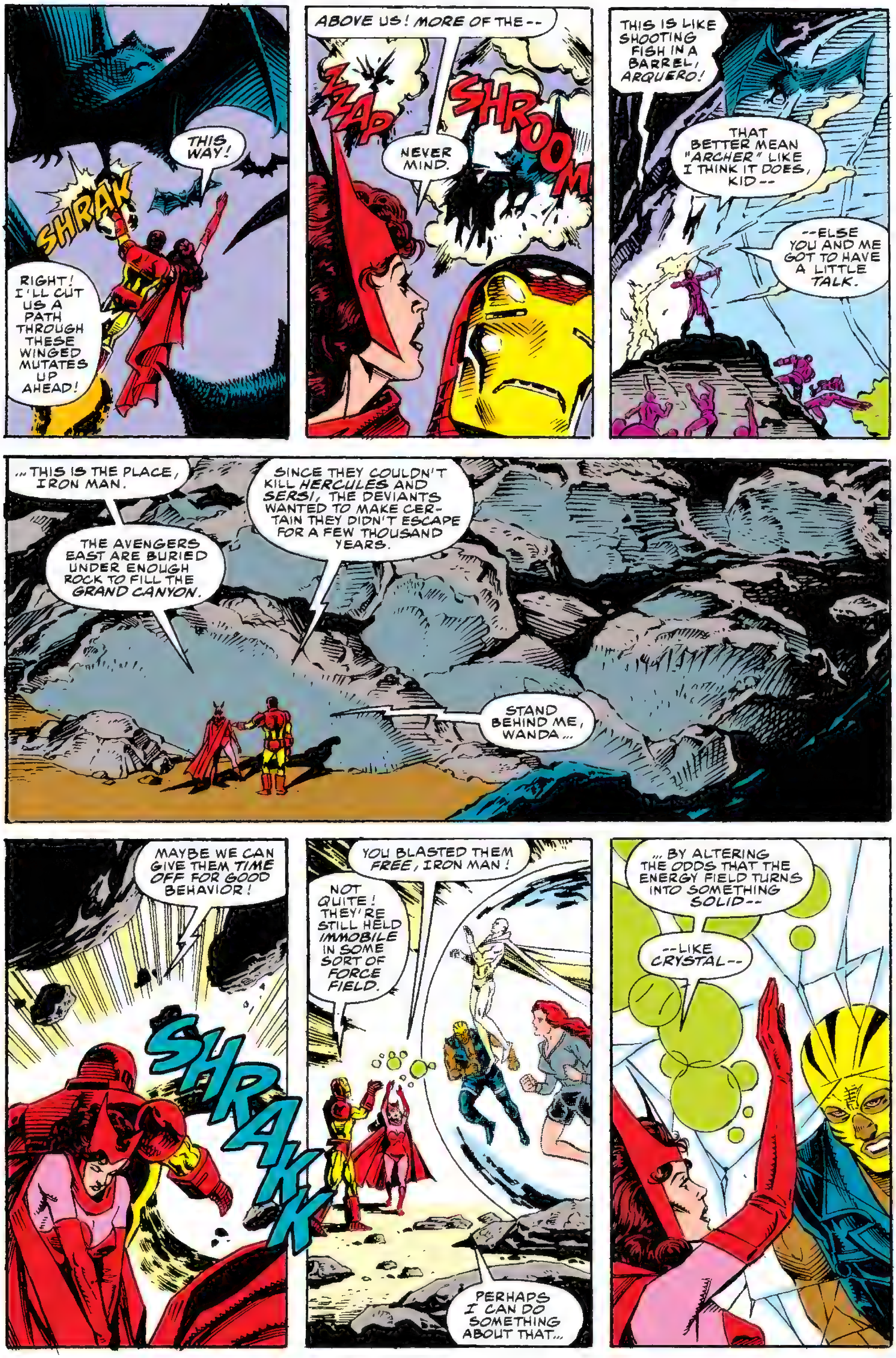

BUT EVEN OUR COMBINED FORCES ARE TOO *DEPLETED* NOW TO *STOP* THEM FOR LONG!
WE'RE *DOOMED!*
AOOOO
STILL, WE *SHALL* RESIST THEM -- TO THE LAST *SILENT SUBTERRANEAN* --
-- AND TO THE LAST UNSPEAKING *LAVA MAN!*
AND TO THE LAST *AVENGER*, TOO -- EH, MY CHALK-FACED FRIEND?
THAT, LORD OF MOLES, GOES WITHOUT SAYING
YES. OR RATHER, NOTHING NEED BE SAID EXCEPT --
AVENGERS ATTACK!

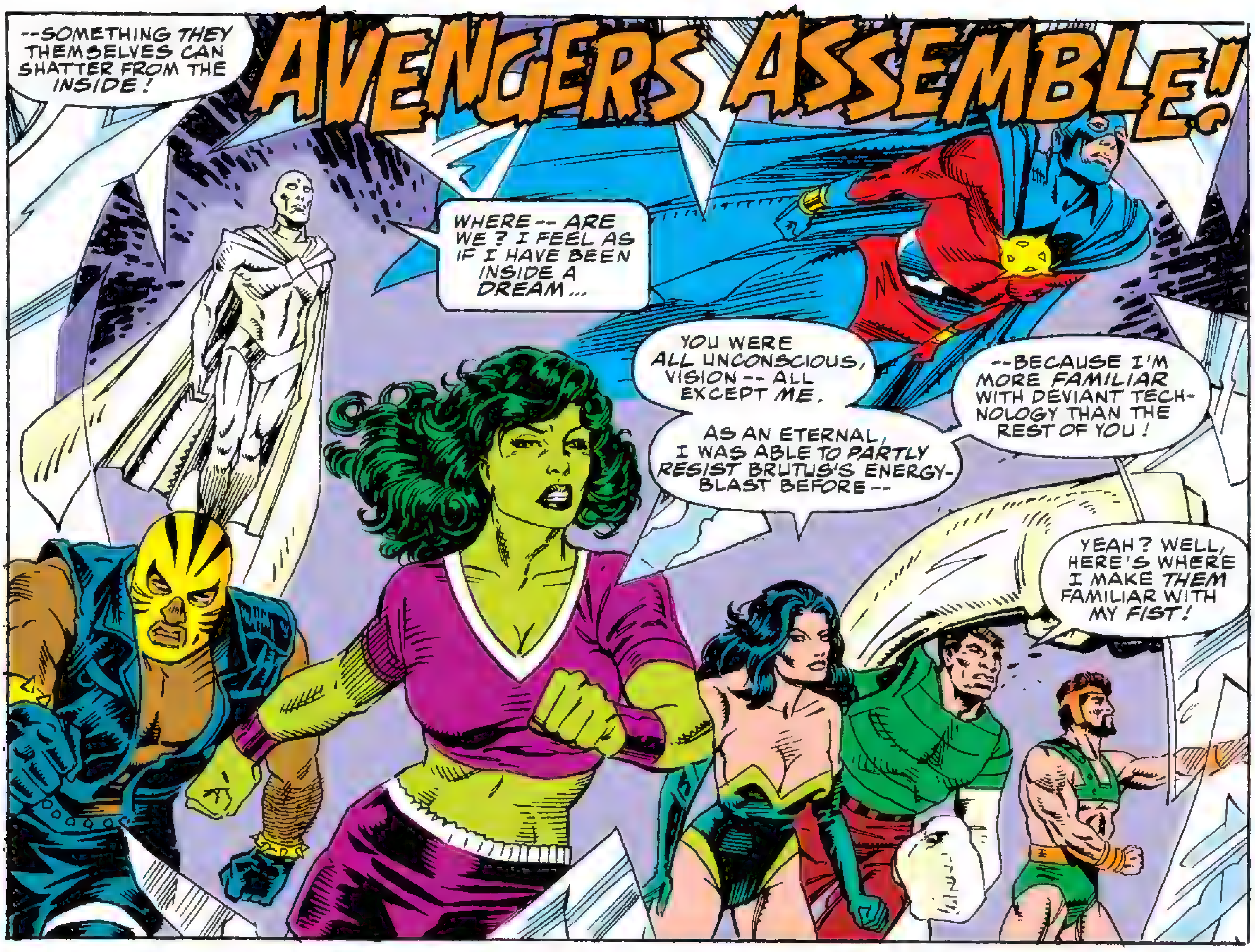

"AND IS IT NOT BETTER BY *FAR*, GOOD GROTESK--
"--TO SEE SUCH *FISTICUFFS* AND *FIREPOWER*--
"--ARRAYED *WITH* US, RATHER THAN *AGAINST* US, FOR A CHANGE?
"*SOME* OF THE NEWCOMERS I'VE NOT *ENCOUNTERED* BEFORE.
"STILL, EVEN *THEY* SEEM A FAIRLY *FORMIDABLE* LOT...
"...AND MORE THAN A MATCH FOR THE NIGH-BRAINLESS *MUTATES* BRUTUS SENDS AGAINST US.
"NOR SHOULD WE OVER-EMPHASIZE THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MORE OVERTLY *PHYSICAL* AMONG THEM.
"WHAT COULD BE MORE HELPFUL, FOR INSTANCE, THAN THE SCARLET WITCH'S *HEX POWER*--
"--WHICH CAN OPEN THE VERY *EARTH* BENEATH THE FEET OF STRUGGLING ANTAGONISTS...

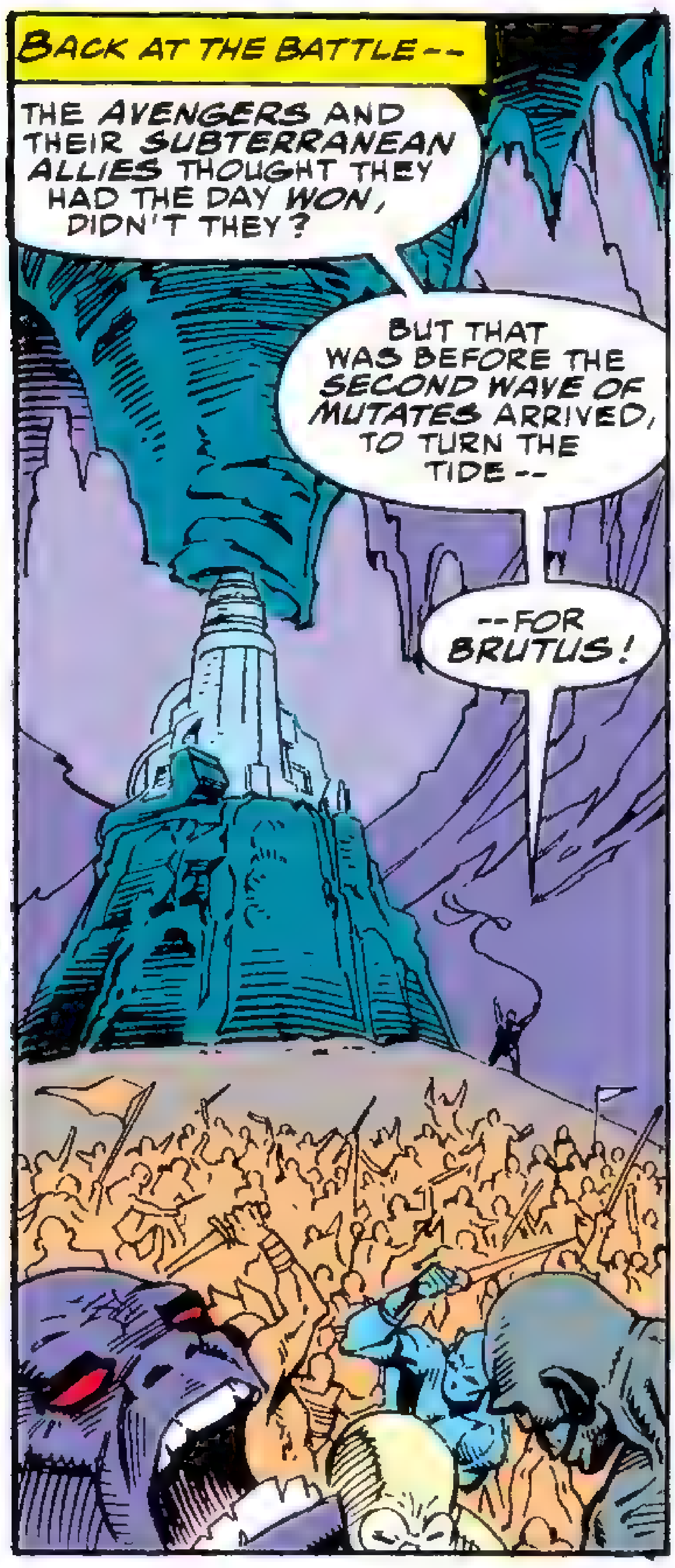

"...GIVING A DECIDED ADVANTAGE TO THE ONE WHO WEARS A *ROCKET-BELT*, DON'T YOU KNOW.
"THEY ARE A *FEARLESS* BREED, AS TYRANNUS AND I HAVE LEARNED, MORE OFTEN THAN YOU, TO OUR SORROW.
"EVEN WHEN A MUTATE SEEMS *IMMUNE* TO A PARTICULAR AVENGER'S POWERS--
"--AS THAT *CLOAK-SHROUDED* ONE APPEARS TO BE, TO THE BLASTS OF THAT YOUTHFUL *THUNDERBOLT*--
"--WHY, THERE ALWAYS SEEMS TO BE *HELP* FROM ANOTHER QUARTER.
"THE AVENGERS TAKE CARE OF THEIR *OWN*.
"THUS, A BATTLE WHICH, MERE MINUTES AGO, SEEMED A CONTESTING AGAINST *HOPELESS ODDS*--
"--NOW SEEMS, AT THE VERY LEAST, BALANCED UPON A *RAZOR-SHARP PRECIPICE*:
"THE CLASH MAY GO *EITHER WAY*--
"--THOUGH IT CANNOT LONG KEEP ON AS IT *IS*."

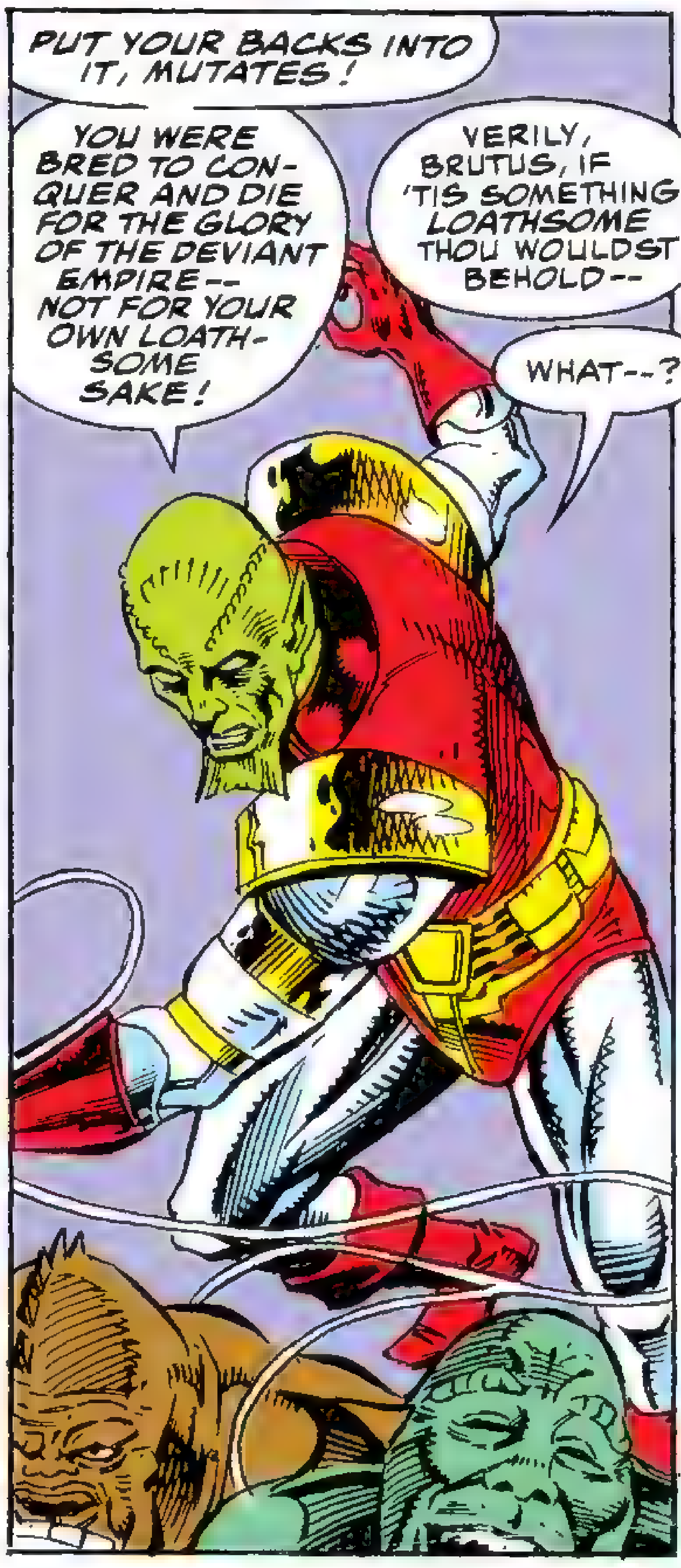

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE TALKING TO, MOLE?
GROTESK SPLIT SEVERAL MINUTES AGO.
KRRUNCH!
SORRY I HAD TO SACRIFICE A FEW SUBS TO TAKE OUT A MOUNTAIN OF MUTATES.
SADLY, YOU HAD NO CHOICE.
BUT--LOOK! THERE IS SOMEONE WHO CLEARLY LOATHES THOSE WHO LOYALLY SERVE HIM--
BRUTUS!
KEEP MOVING, YOU MUTATE MONGRELS!
WE MUST CAPTURE OUR FOES' PRECISE POSITION, FROM WHICH TO OPERATE OUR OSCILLATRON!
LET YOUR HIDEOUS DEAD PILE HIGHER THAN LIES THE EARTH ABOVE DEVIANT LEMURIA, IF NECESSARY--
--BUT OVERWHELM OUR ENEMIES, AT ALL COSTS!
NONE OF US DEVIANTS LOVE THE BEASTLIKE MUTATES--BUT WHY DOES BRUTUS DESPISE THEM SO?
DO YOU WANT TO BE THE ONE TO ASK HIM?
I DIDN'T THINK SO.
AVENGERS! YOU ARE FAR TOO LATE TO RESCUE YOUR CAPTURED COMRADES!
THEY WILL BE DEAD LONG BEFORE YOU COULD POSSIBLY FIND THEM AMONG THESE LABYRINTHS!
I BURIED THEM, UNCONSCIOUS, HOURS AGO--
--LEAVING THEM JUST ENOUGH AIR THAT IT WILL BE EXHAUSTED, EVEN WHILE WE STRIVE HERE!
THUS SHALL IT BE WITH ALL WHO OPPOSE THE WILL OF BRUTUS, WARLORD OF THE DEVIANTS!

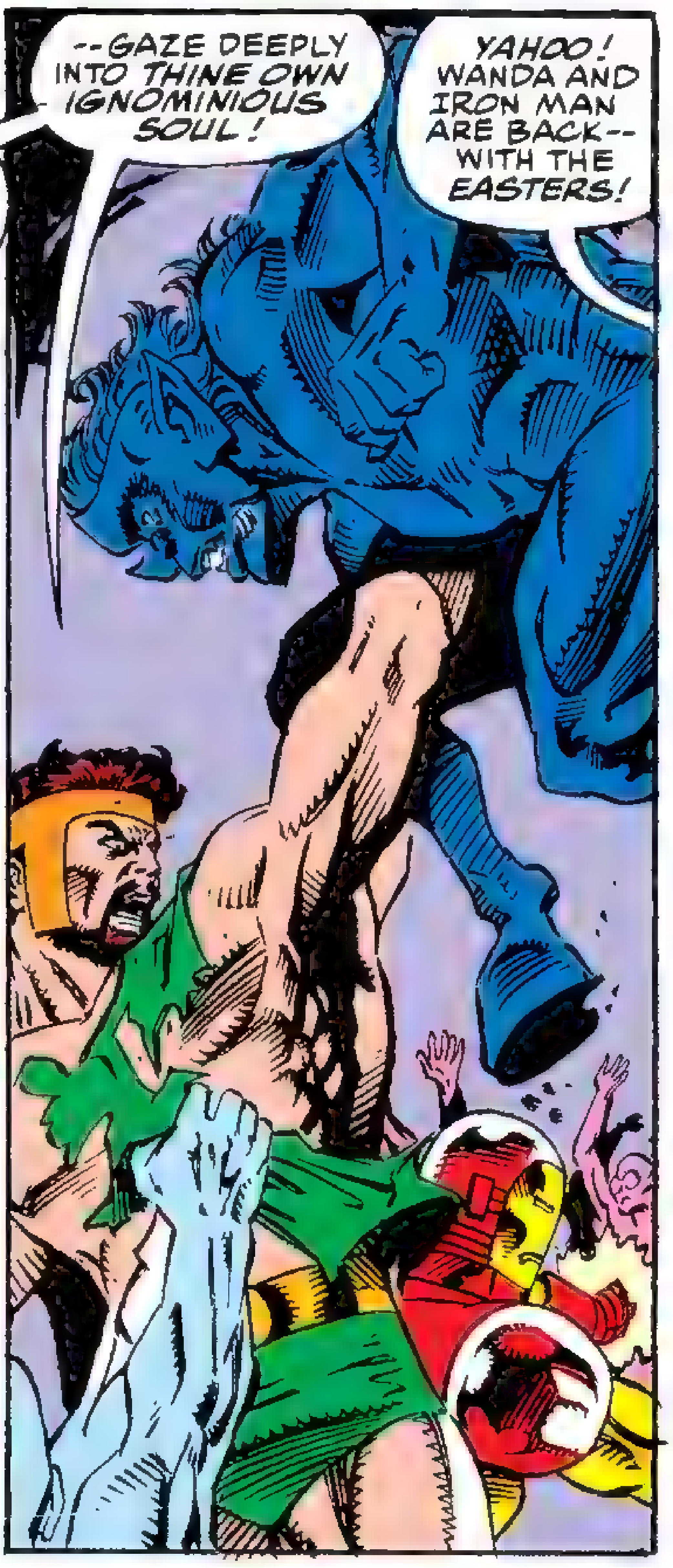

IF THE VISION WERE CONSCIOUS, HE COULD PASS THROUGH ANY SUBSTANCE!
YES, THEY WILL ALL PERISH-- HERCULES, SERSI...
SERSI? WAIT! SHE'S AN EMPATH!
IF SHE'S AWAKE, PERHAPS I CAN CONTACT HER MENTALLY-- LEARN THEIR LOCATION.
BUT IF THE ANDROID IS UNCONSCIOUS, SHE MAY BE ALSO!
IT'S STILL OUR ONLY CHANCE! GOT TO CONCENTRATE...
SERSI...
SERSI...
WAIT--!
CONTACT!
AVENGERS! I'VE REACHED SERSI'S MIND!
TURNS OUT SHE'S BEEN TRYING TO REACH OUT TO SOMEONE, TOO--SO WE LOCKED PSYCHES!
'WAY TO GO, WANDA!
IRON MAN, YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE ME TO HER AND THE OTHERS.
I WANT TO--BUT, THE BATTLE--
WITH LUCK, WE'LL RESCUE THEM AND BE BACK HERE BEFORE YOUR MISSING FIREPOWER BECOMES CRUCIAL.
AND CAN YOU GUARANTEE THAT LUCK?
NO.
YOU'VE STILL GOT TO GO, IRON MAN -- AND YOU KNOW IT!
YES.

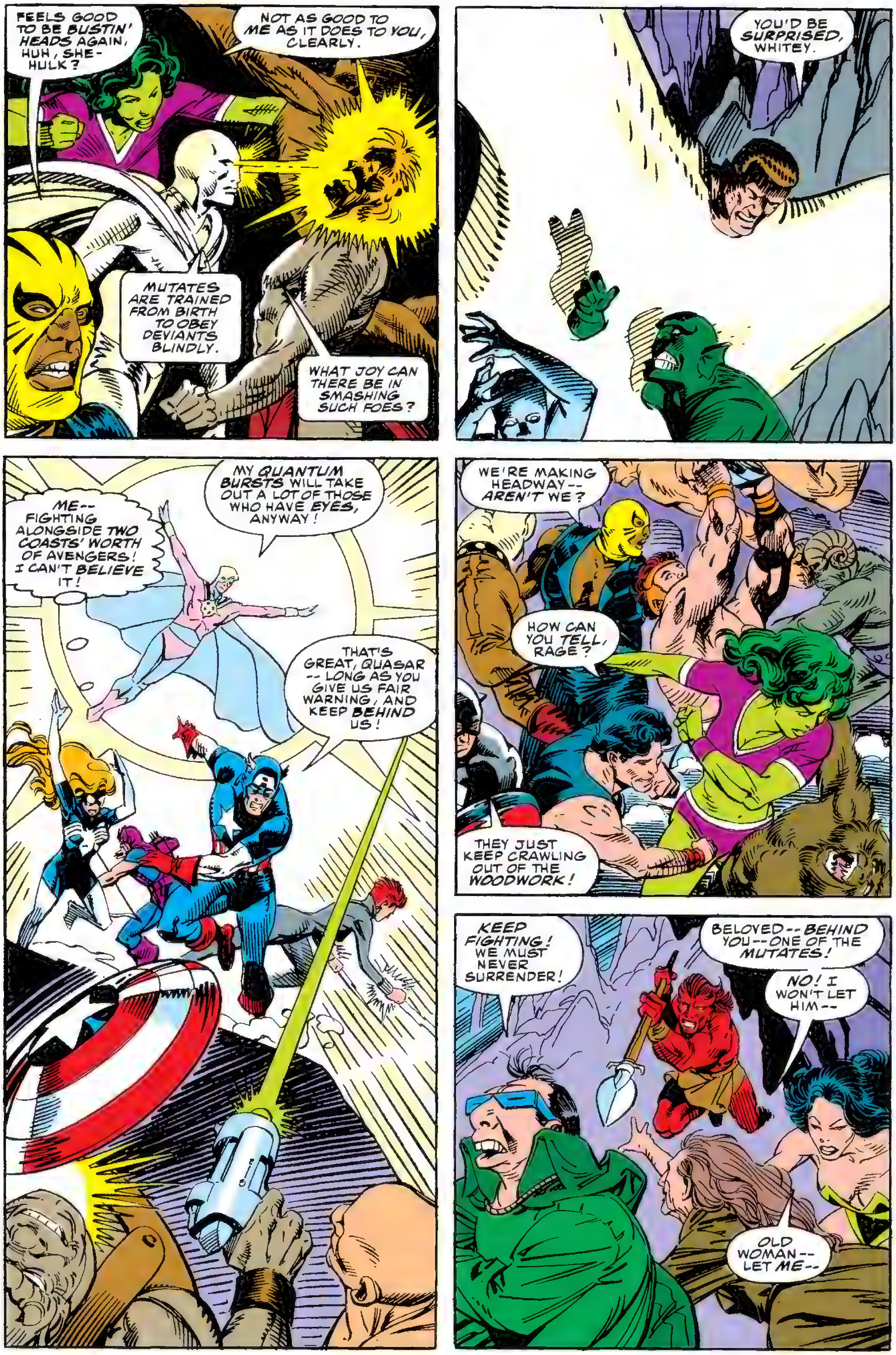

SHRAK
THIS WAY!
RIGHT! I'LL CUT US A PATH THROUGH THESE WINGED MUTATES UP AHEAD!
ABOVE US! MORE OF THE--
ZZAP
SHROOM
NEVER MIND.
THIS IS LIKE SHOOTING FISH IN A BARREL, ARQUERO!
THAT BETTER MEAN "ARCHER" LIKE I THINK IT DOES, KID--
--ELSE YOU AND ME GOT TO HAVE A LITTLE TALK.
...THIS IS THE PLACE, IRON MAN.
THE AVENGERS EAST ARE BURIED UNDER ENOUGH ROCK TO FILL THE GRAND CANYON.
SINCE THEY COULDN'T KILL HERCULES AND SERSI, THE DEVIANTS WANTED TO MAKE CERTAIN THEY DIDN'T ESCAPE FOR A FEW THOUSAND YEARS.
STAND BEHIND ME, WANDA...
MAYBE WE CAN GIVE THEM TIME OFF FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR!
SHRAKK
YOU BLASTED THEM FREE, IRON MAN!
NOT QUITE! THEY'RE STILL HELD IMMOBILE IN SOME SORT OF FORCE FIELD.
PERHAPS I CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT...
...BY ALTERING THE ODDS THAT THE ENERGY FIELD TURNS INTO SOMETHING SOLID--
--LIKE CRYSTAL--

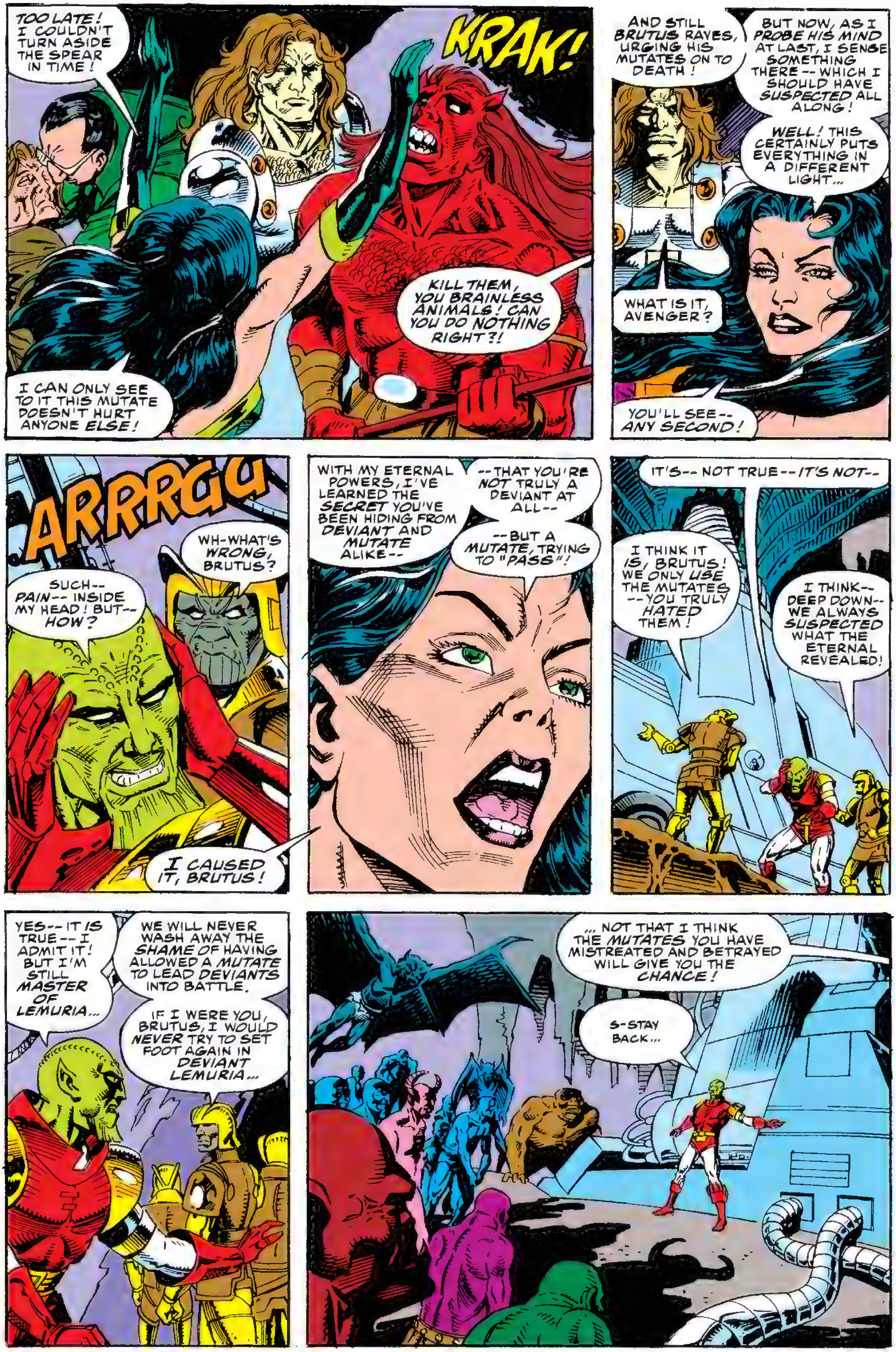

--SOMETHING THEY THEMSELVES CAN SHATTER FROM THE INSIDE!
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
WHERE-- ARE WE? I FEEL AS IF I HAVE BEEN INSIDE A DREAM...
YOU WERE ALL UNCONSCIOUS, VISION -- ALL EXCEPT ME.
AS AN ETERNAL, I WAS ABLE TO PARTLY RESIST BRUTUS'S ENERGY-BLAST BEFORE--
--BECAUSE I'M MORE FAMILIAR WITH DEVIANT TECHNOLOGY THAN THE REST OF YOU!
YEAH? WELL, HERE'S WHERE I MAKE THEM FAMILIAR WITH MY FIST!

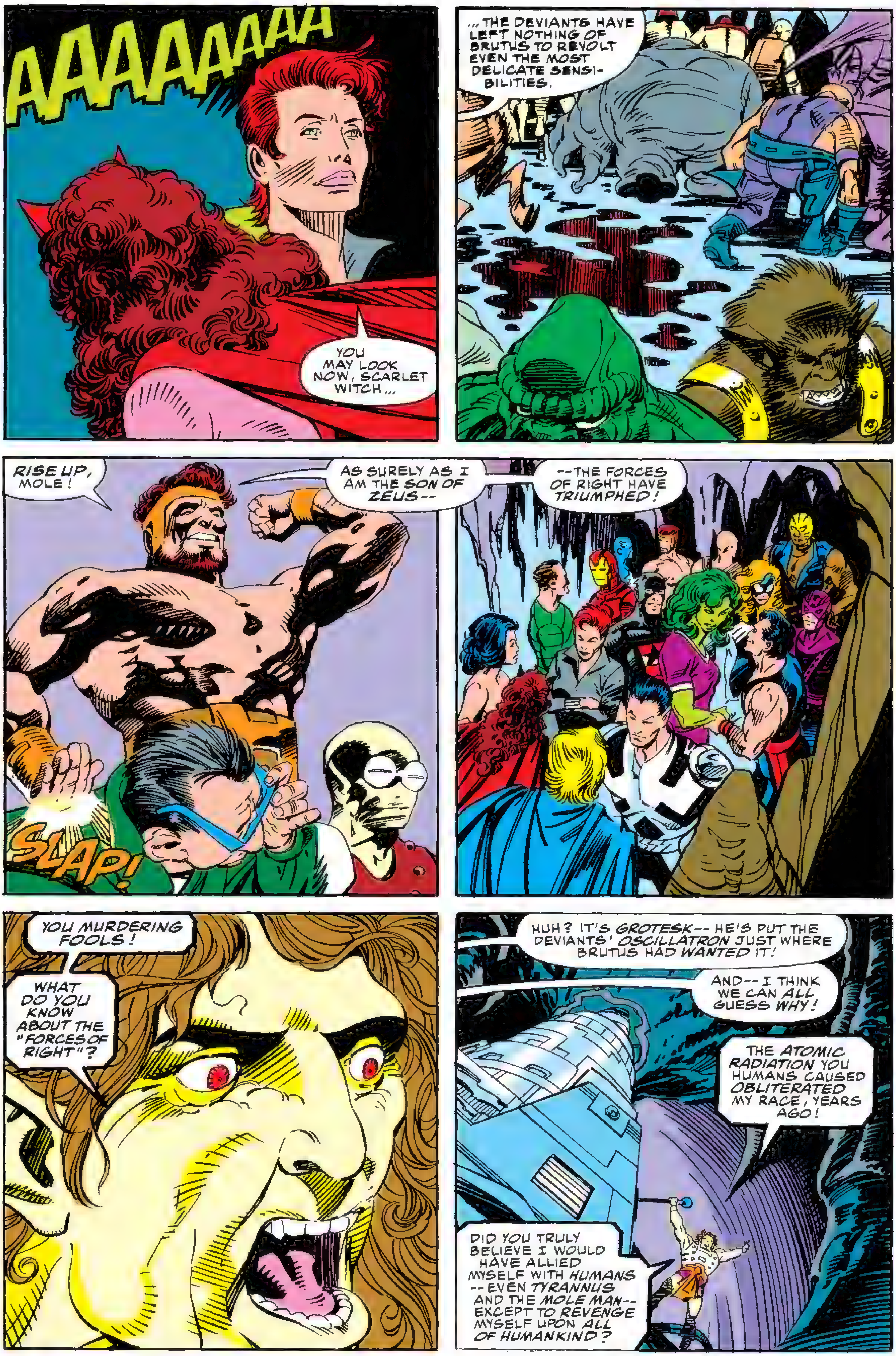

BACK AT THE BATTLE--
THE AVENGERS AND THEIR SUBTERRANEAN ALLIES THOUGHT THEY HAD THE DAY WON, DIDN'T THEY?
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE THE SECOND WAVE OF MUTATES ARRIVED, TO TURN THE TIDE--
--FOR BRUTUS!


PUT YOUR BACKS INTO IT, MUTATES!
YOU WERE BRED TO CONQUER AND DIE FOR THE GLORY OF THE DEVIANT EMPIRE-- NOT FOR YOUR OWN LOATHSOME SAKE!
VERILY, BRUTUS, IF 'TIS SOMETHING LOATHSOME THOU WOULDST BEHOLD--
WHAT--?

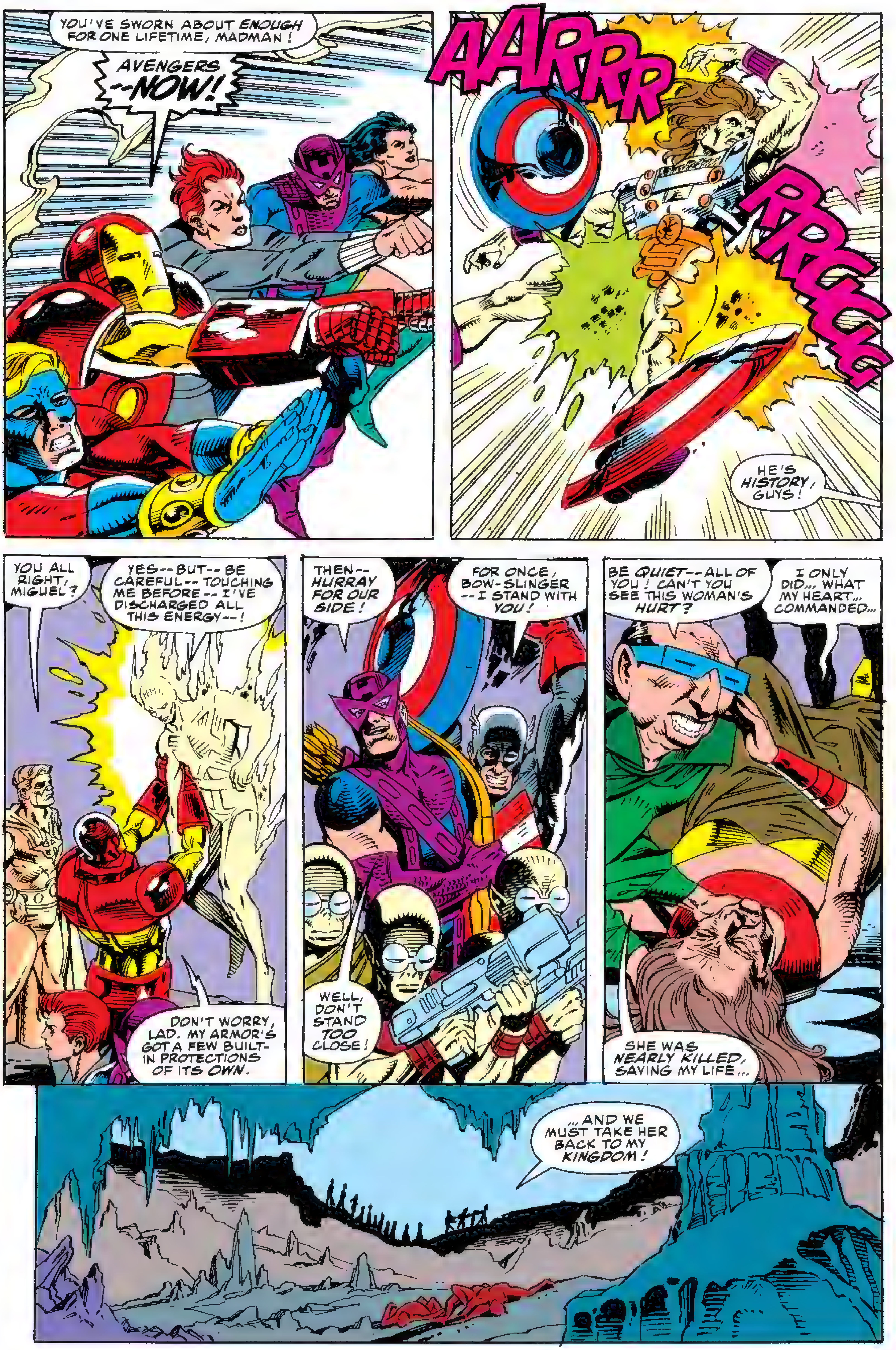

--GAZE DEEPLY INTO THINE OWN IGNOMINIOUS SOUL!
YAHOO! WANDA AND IRON MAN ARE BACK-- WITH THE EASTERS!

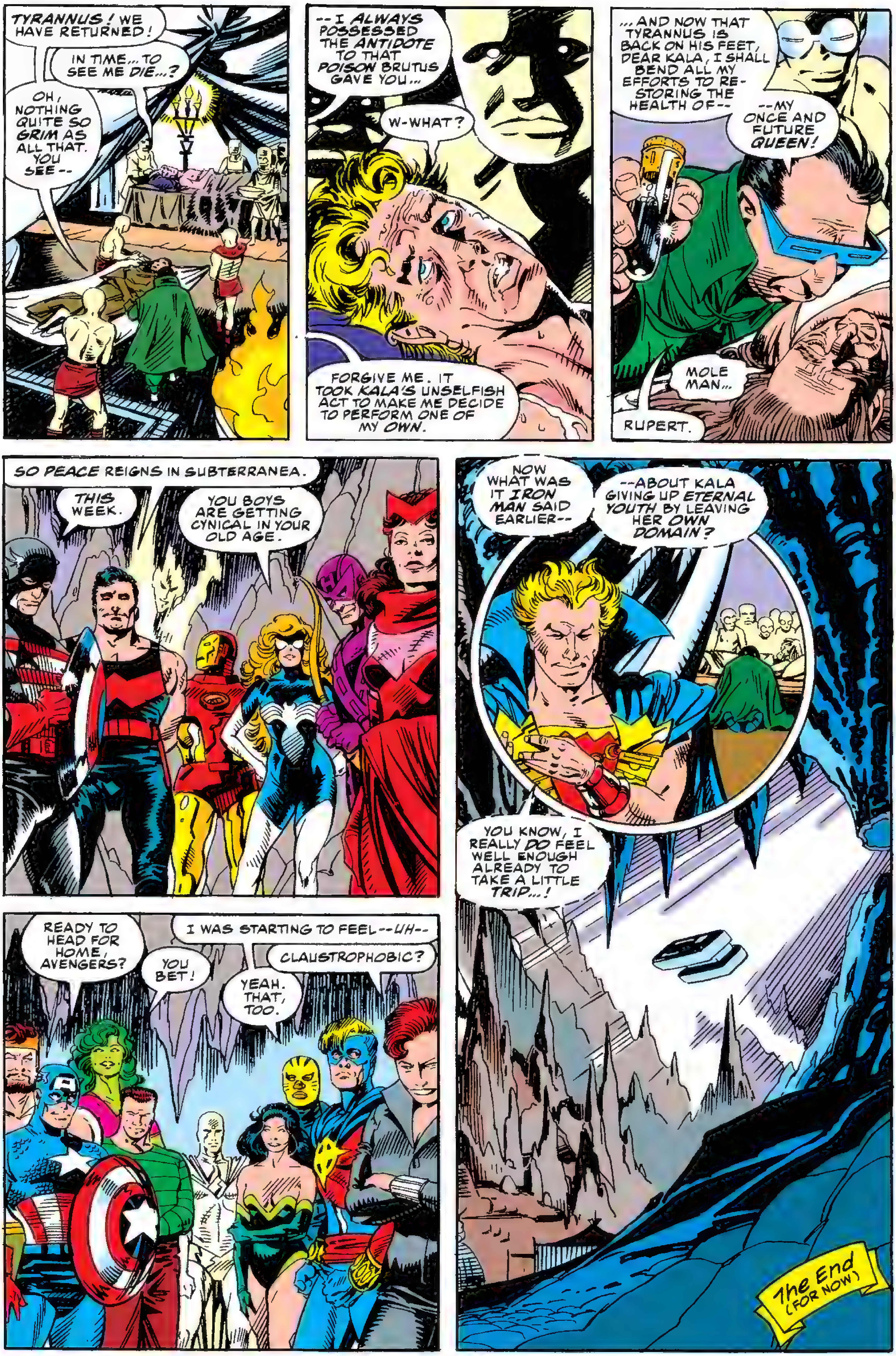

FEELS GOOD TO BE *BUSTIN'* HEADS AGAIN, HUH, SHE-HULK?
NOT AS GOOD TO *ME* AS IT DOES TO *YOU*, CLEARLY.
MUTATES ARE TRAINED FROM BIRTH TO OBEY DEVIANTS BLINDLY.
WHAT JOY CAN THERE BE IN *SMASHING* SUCH FOES?
YOU'D BE *SURPRISED*, WHITEY.
ME-- FIGHTING ALONGSIDE *TWO COASTS'* WORTH OF AVENGERS! I CAN'T *BELIEVE* IT!
MY *QUANTUM BURSTS* WILL TAKE OUT A LOT OF THOSE WHO HAVE *EYES*, ANYWAY!
THAT'S GREAT, QUASAR -- LONG AS YOU GIVE US FAIR WARNING, AND KEEP *BEHIND* US!
WE'RE MAKING HEADWAY -- *AREN'T* WE?
HOW CAN YOU *TELL*, RAGE?
THEY JUST KEEP CRAWLING OUT OF THE *WOODWORK*!
KEEP FIGHTING! WE MUST NEVER SURRENDER!
BELOVED -- *BEHIND* YOU -- ONE OF THE *MUTATES*!
NO! I WON'T LET HIM --
OLD WOMAN -- LET *ME* --


TOO LATE! I COULDN'T TURN ASIDE THE SPEAR IN TIME!
KRAK!
KILL THEM, YOU BRAINLESS ANIMALS! CAN YOU DO NOTHING RIGHT?!
I CAN ONLY SEE TO IT THIS MUTATE DOESN'T HURT ANYONE ELSE!
AND STILL BRUTUS RAVES, URGING HIS MUTATES ON TO DEATH!
BUT NOW, AS I PROBE HIS MIND AT LAST, I SENSE SOMETHING THERE -- WHICH I SHOULD HAVE SUSPECTED ALL ALONG!
WELL! THIS CERTAINLY PUTS EVERYTHING IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT...
WHAT IS IT, AVENGER?
YOU'LL SEE -- ANY SECOND!
ARRRGG
WH-WHAT'S WRONG, BRUTUS?
SUCH -- PAIN -- INSIDE MY HEAD! BUT -- HOW?
I CAUSED IT, BRUTUS!
WITH MY ETERNAL POWERS, I'VE LEARNED THE SECRET YOU'VE BEEN HIDING FROM DEVIANT AND MUTATE ALIKE --
-- THAT YOU'RE NOT TRULY A DEVIANT AT ALL --
-- BUT A MUTATE, TRYING TO "PASS"!
IT'S -- NOT TRUE -- IT'S NOT --
I THINK IT IS, BRUTUS! WE ONLY USE THE MUTATES -- YOU TRULY HATED THEM!
I THINK -- DEEP DOWN -- WE ALWAYS SUSPECTED WHAT THE ETERNAL REVEALED!
YES -- IT IS TRUE -- I ADMIT IT! BUT I'M STILL MASTER OF LEMURIA...
WE WILL NEVER WASH AWAY THE SHAME OF HAVING ALLOWED A MUTATE TO LEAD DEVIANTS INTO BATTLE.
IF I WERE YOU, BRUTUS, I WOULD NEVER TRY TO SET FOOT AGAIN IN DEVIANT LEMURIA...
... NOT THAT I THINK THE MUTATES YOU HAVE MISTREATED AND BETRAYED WILL GIVE YOU THE CHANCE!
S-STAY BACK...


AAAAAAAA
YOU MAY LOOK NOW, SCARLET WITCH...
...THE DEVIANTS HAVE LEFT NOTHING OF BRUTUS TO REVOLT EVEN THE MOST DELICATE SENSIBILITIES.
RISE UP, MOLE!
SLAP!
AS SURELY AS I AM THE SON OF ZEUS--
--THE FORCES OF RIGHT HAVE TRIUMPHED!
YOU MURDERING FOOLS!
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE "FORCES OF RIGHT"?
HUH? IT'S GROTESK-- HE'S PUT THE DEVIANTS' OSCILLATRON JUST WHERE BRUTUS HAD WANTED IT!
AND-- I THINK WE CAN ALL GUESS WHY!
THE ATOMIC RADIATION YOU HUMANS CAUSED OBLITERATED MY RACE, YEARS AGO!
DID YOU TRULY BELIEVE I WOULD HAVE ALLIED MYSELF WITH HUMANS -- EVEN TYRANNUS AND THE MOLE MAN-- EXCEPT TO REVENGE MYSELF UPON ALL OF HUMANKIND?

CAPTAIN AMERICA--CAN THAT THING REALLY SHAKE THE WHOLE SURFACE WORLD EARTH TO PIECES, LIKE HE CLAIMS?
WE'LL FIND OUT IN A SECOND, AGENT, IF WE TRY TO CHARGE HIM.
AND IF WE DON'T?
THEN WE FIND OUT --IN TWO SECONDS.
GROTESK--STOP! YOU'LL DESTROY EVERYTHING DOWN HERE, TOO-- YOUR OWN LAVA MEN--THE OTHER SUBTERRANEANS--
DO YOU THINK I CARE ABOUT THEIR LIVES--OR MY OWN?
I RENDERED MY LAVA MEN MUTE, SO THEY COULD NOT BETRAY MY TRUE, LONG-SWORN MOTIVE.
I HAD LEARNED OF THE OSCILLATRON--AND KNEW BRUTUS WOULD BRING IT WITH HIM!
I HAVE ALTERED ITS SETTING--SO THAT IT WILL BREAK APART NOT ONLY THE SURFACE WORLD, BUT THE ENTIRE PLANET!
THAT, AND THAT ALONE, HAS EVER BEEN MY PURPOSE--
--TO DIE, LIKE MY PEOPLE--
--WHILE THE EARTH DIES WITH ME!
WHAT?
NOTHING... HAPPENED.
WHAT DID... YOU THINK WOULD HAPPEN... AMIGO...
YOU--LIGHTNING-- YOU DID THIS TO ME?!
...AFTER I ABSORBED... SO MUCH OF THIS THING'S ENERGY ...IT HASN'T GOT ENOUGH LEFT... TO RUN A TOY BOAT...?
I SWEAR THAT I WILL--


YOU'VE SWORN ABOUT *ENOUGH* FOR ONE LIFETIME, MADMAN!
AVENGERS --*NOW!*
AARRRR
RRGGGG
HE'S *HISTORY*, GUYS!
YOU ALL RIGHT, MIGUEL?
YES-- BUT-- BE CAREFUL-- TOUCHING ME BEFORE-- I'VE DISCHARGED ALL THIS ENERGY--!
DON'T WORRY, LAD. MY ARMOR'S GOT A FEW BUILT-IN PROTECTIONS OF ITS *OWN*.
THEN-- *HURRAY FOR OUR SIDE!*
FOR ONCE, BOW-SLINGER --I STAND WITH *YOU!*
WELL, DON'T STAND *TOO* CLOSE!
BE *QUIET*-- ALL OF YOU! CAN'T YOU SEE THIS WOMAN'S *HURT?*
I ONLY DID... WHAT MY HEART... COMMANDED...
SHE WAS *NEARLY KILLED*, SAVING MY LIFE...
...AND WE MUST TAKE HER BACK TO MY *KINGDOM!*

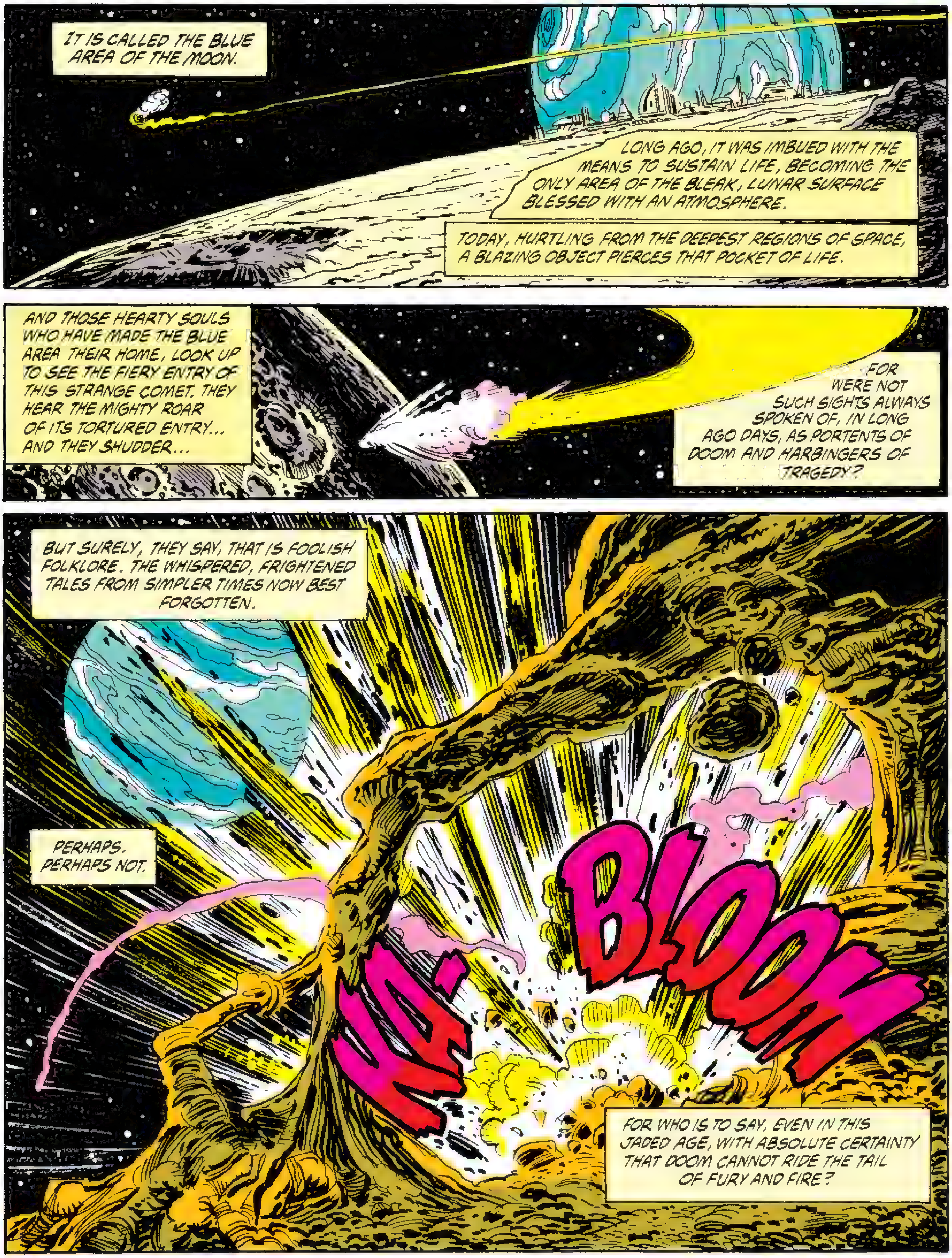

TYRANNUS! WE HAVE RETURNED!
IN TIME... TO SEE ME DIE...?
OH, NOTHING QUITE SO GRIM AS ALL THAT. YOU SEE--
--I ALWAYS POSSESSED THE ANTIDOTE TO THAT POISON BRUTUS GAVE YOU...
W-WHAT?
FORGIVE ME. IT TOOK KALA'S UNSELFISH ACT TO MAKE ME DECIDE TO PERFORM ONE OF MY OWN.
...AND NOW THAT TYRANNUS IS BACK ON HIS FEET, DEAR KALA, I SHALL BEND ALL MY EFFORTS TO RESTORING THE HEALTH OF--
--MY ONCE AND FUTURE QUEEN!
MOLE MAN...
RUPERT.
SO PEACE REIGNS IN SUBTERRANEA.
THIS WEEK.
YOU BOYS ARE GETTING CYNICAL IN YOUR OLD AGE.
READY TO HEAD FOR HOME, AVENGERS?
YOU BET!
I WAS STARTING TO FEEL--UH--
CLAUSTROPHOBIC?
YEAH. THAT, TOO.
NOW WHAT WAS IT IRON MAN SAID EARLIER--
--ABOUT KALA GIVING UP ETERNAL YOUTH BY LEAVING HER OWN DOMAIN?
YOU KNOW, I REALLY DO FEEL WELL ENOUGH ALREADY TO TAKE A LITTLE TRIP...!
The End (FOR NOW)

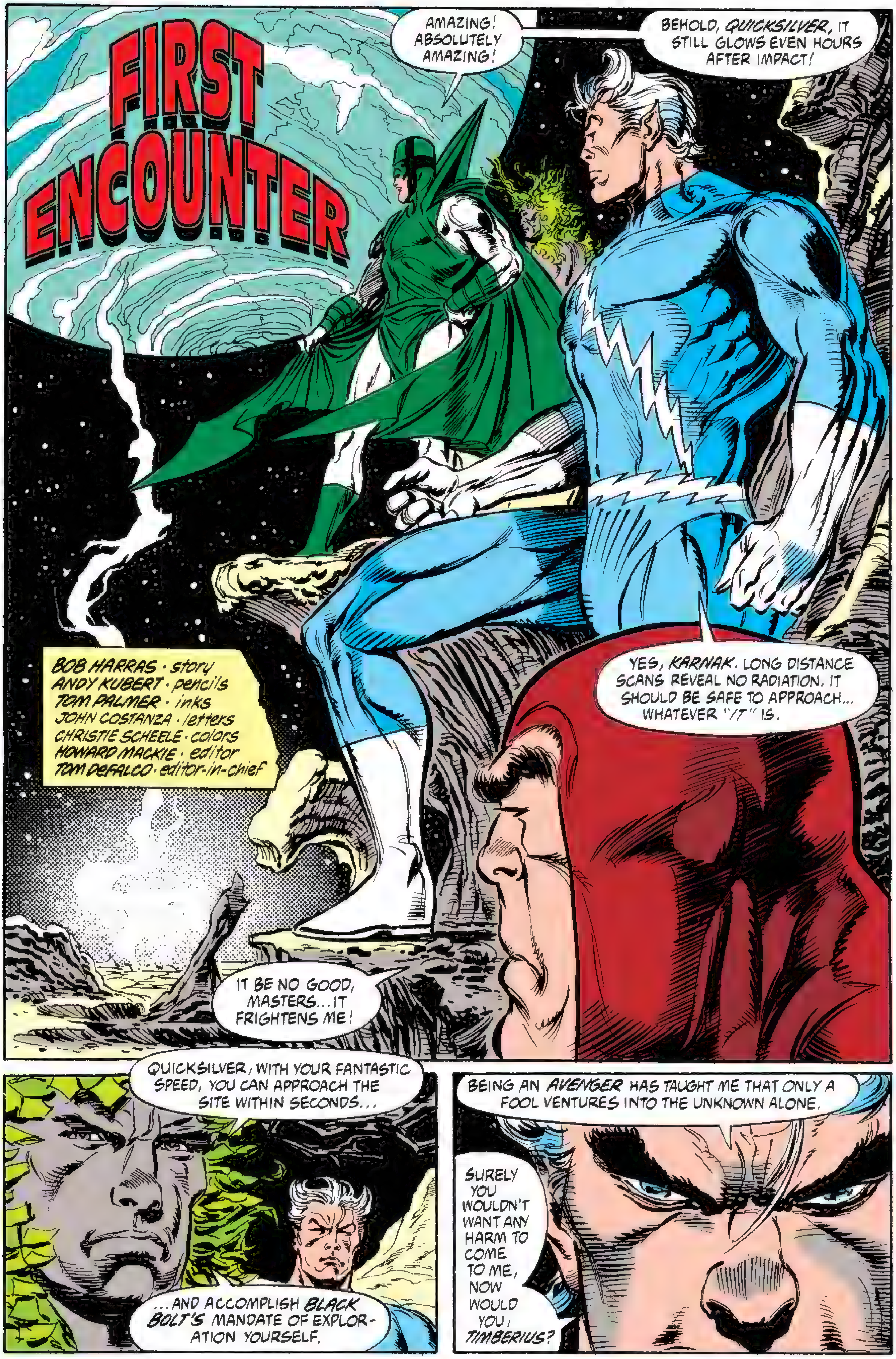
MARVEL COMICS
THE COLLECTION OBSESSION PART 1
AVENGERS®
© 1991 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
TM
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN
334
JULY
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
ANDY KUBERT
THANE ECTOR!™

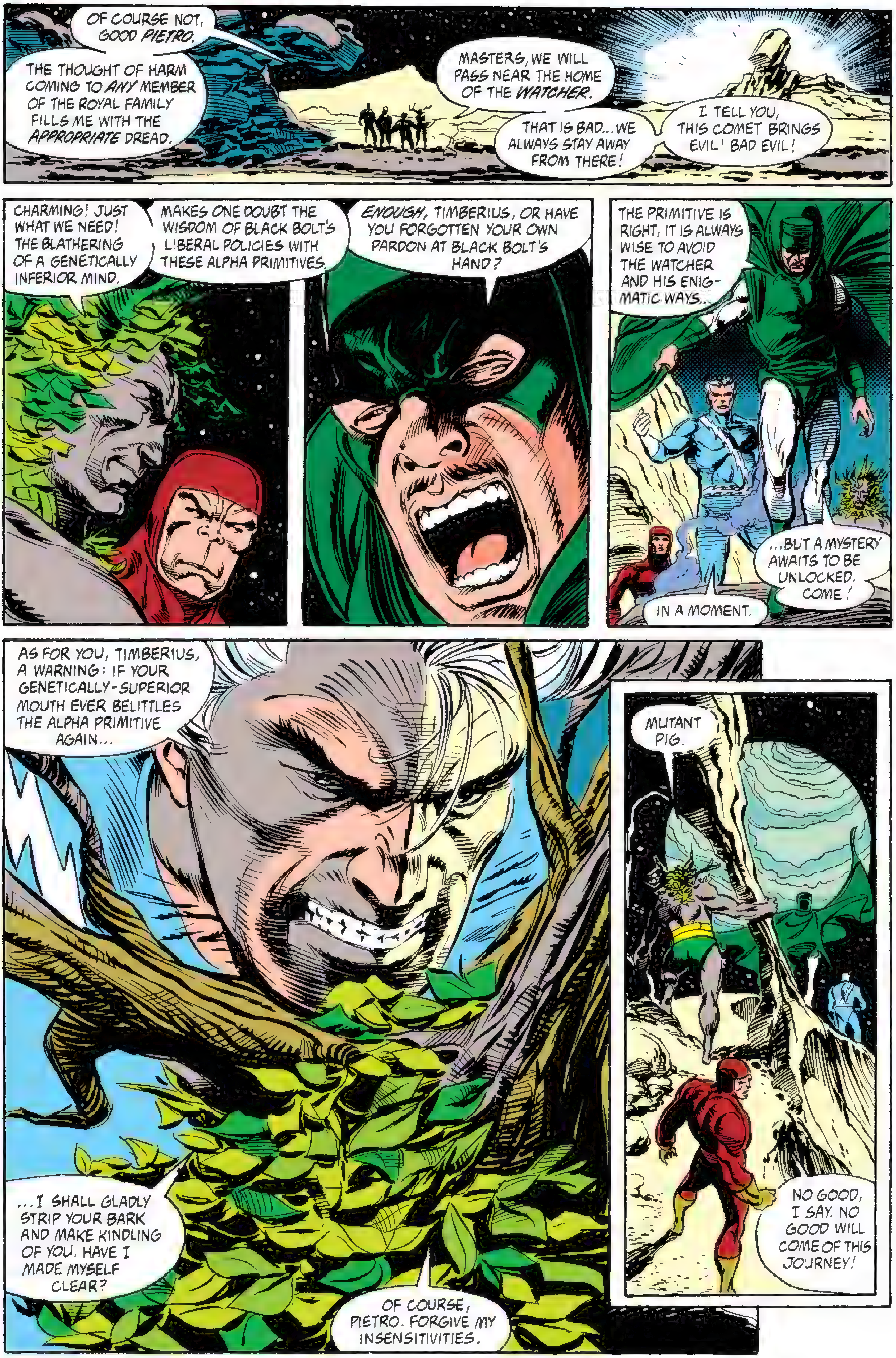
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!

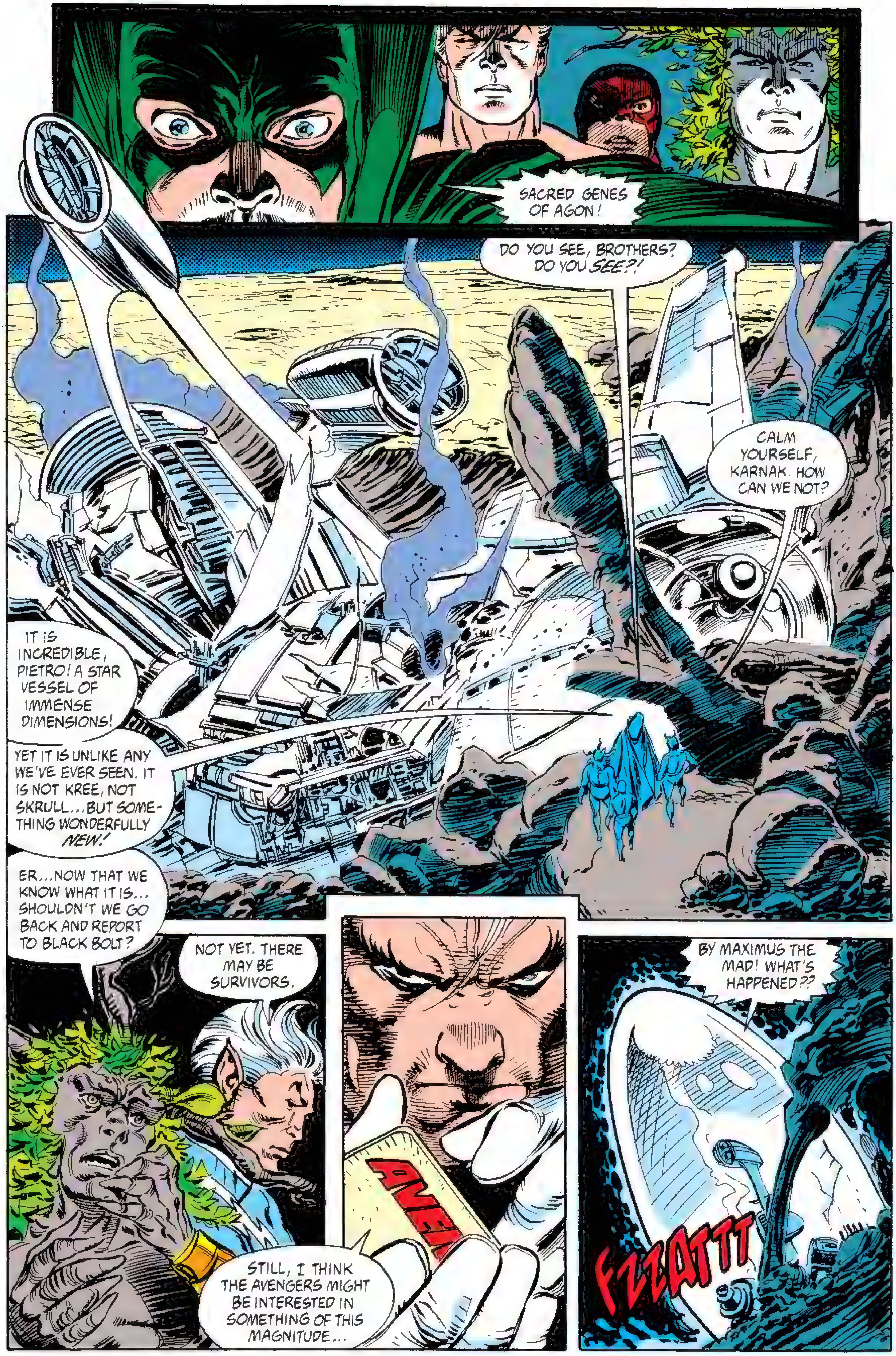
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . .

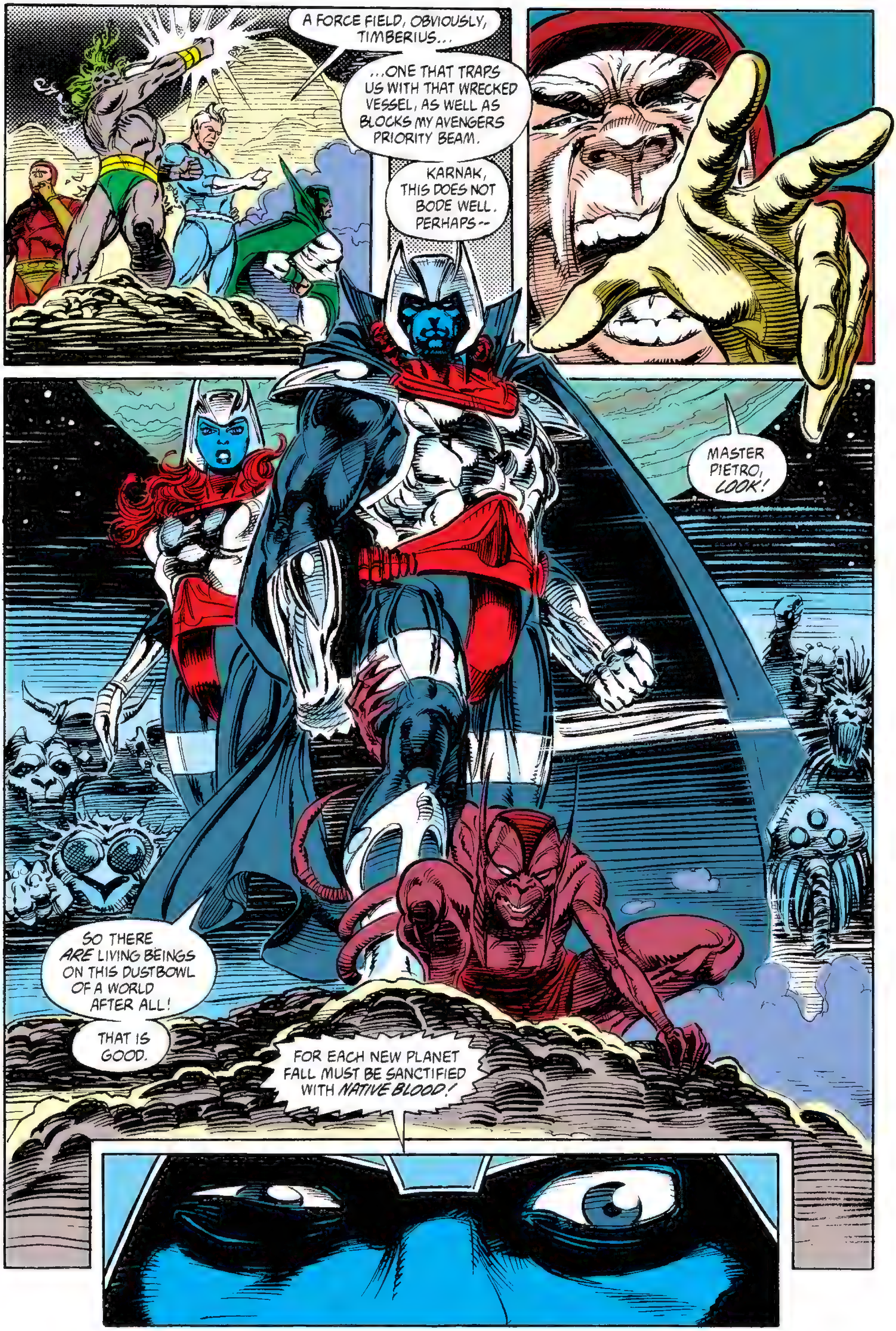
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

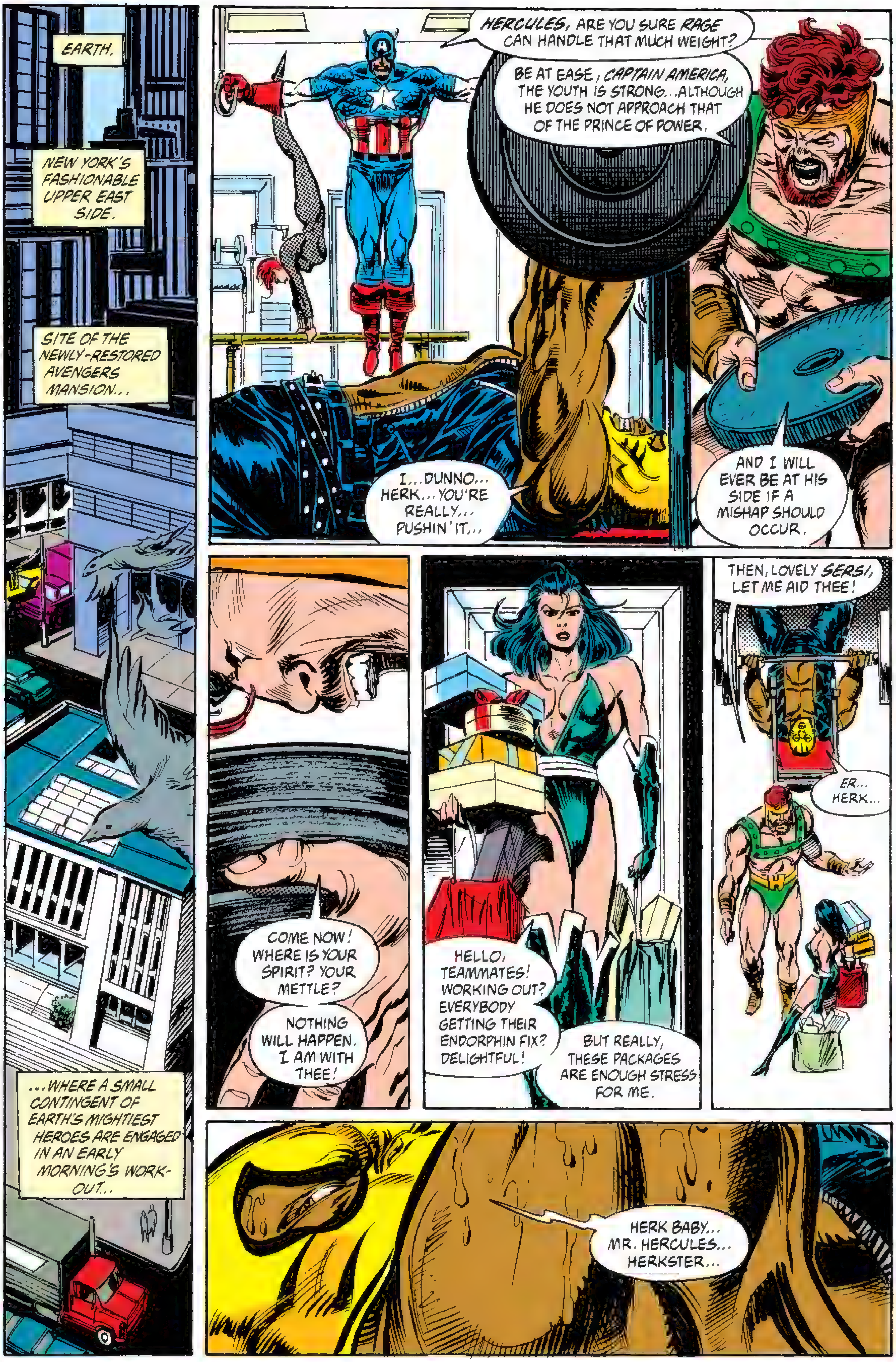

IT IS CALLED THE BLUE AREA OF THE MOON.
LONG AGO, IT WAS IMBUED WITH THE MEANS TO SUSTAIN LIFE, BECOMING THE ONLY AREA OF THE BLEAK, LUNAR SURFACE BLESSED WITH AN ATMOSPHERE.
TODAY, HURTLING FROM THE DEEPEST REGIONS OF SPACE, A BLAZING OBJECT PIERCES THAT POCKET OF LIFE.
AND THOSE HEARTY SOULS WHO HAVE MADE THE BLUE AREA THEIR HOME, LOOK UP TO SEE THE FIERY ENTRY OF THIS STRANGE COMET. THEY HEAR THE MIGHTY ROAR OF ITS TORTURED ENTRY... AND THEY SHUDDER...
FOR WERE NOT SUCH SIGHTS ALWAYS SPOKEN OF, IN LONG AGO DAYS, AS PORTENTS OF DOOM AND HARBINGERS OF TRAGEDY?
BUT SURELY, THEY SAY, THAT IS FOOLISH FOLKLORE. THE WHISPERED, FRIGHTENED TALES FROM SIMPLER TIMES NOW BEST FORGOTTEN.
PERHAPS. PERHAPS NOT.
KA-BLOOM
FOR WHO IS TO SAY, EVEN IN THIS JADED AGE, WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT DOOM CANNOT RIDE THE TAIL OF FURY AND FIRE?


FIRST ENCOUNTER
AMAZING! ABSOLUTELY AMAZING!
BEHOLD, *QUICKSILVER*, IT STILL GLOWS EVEN HOURS AFTER IMPACT!
YES, *KARNAK*. LONG DISTANCE SCANS REVEAL NO RADIATION. IT SHOULD BE SAFE TO APPROACH... WHATEVER "*IT*" IS.
BOB HARRAS · story
ANDY KUBERT · pencils
TOM PALMER · inks
JOHN COSTANZA · letters
CHRISTIE SCHEELE · colors
HOWARD MACKIE · editor
TOM DeFALCO · editor-in-chief
IT BE NO GOOD, MASTERS... IT FRIGHTENS ME!
QUICKSILVER, WITH YOUR FANTASTIC SPEED, YOU CAN APPROACH THE SITE WITHIN SECONDS...
...AND ACCOMPLISH *BLACK BOLT'S* MANDATE OF EXPLORATION YOURSELF.
BEING AN *AVENGER* HAS TAUGHT ME THAT ONLY A FOOL VENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN ALONE.
SURELY YOU WOULDN'T WANT ANY HARM TO COME TO ME, NOW WOULD YOU, *TIMBERIUS*?

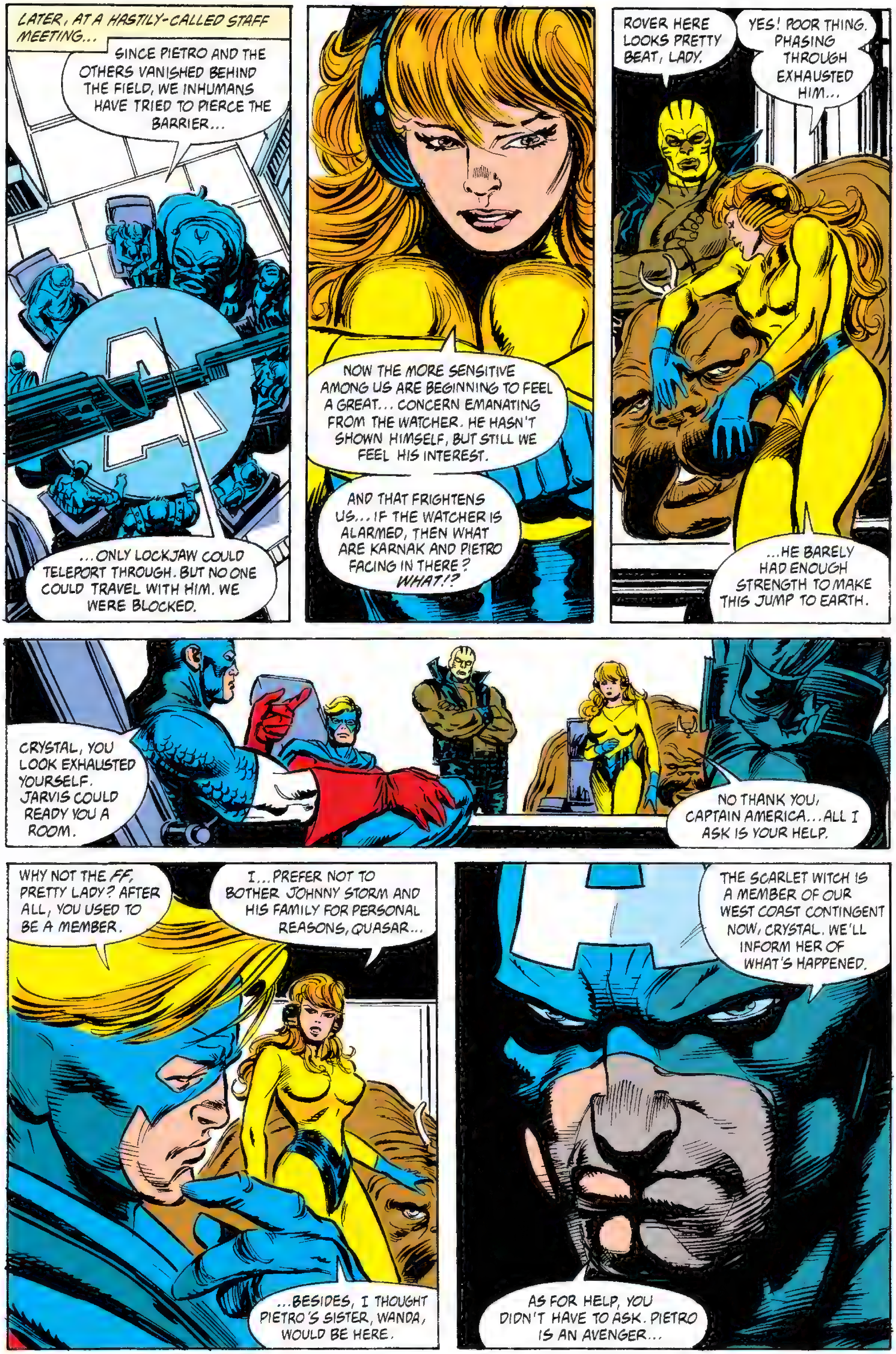

OF COURSE NOT, GOOD *PIETRO*.
THE THOUGHT OF HARM COMING TO *ANY* MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY FILLS ME WITH THE *APPROPRIATE* DREAD.
MASTERS, WE WILL PASS NEAR THE HOME OF THE *WATCHER*.
THAT IS BAD... WE ALWAYS STAY AWAY FROM THERE!
I TELL YOU, THIS COMET BRINGS EVIL! BAD EVIL!
CHARMING! JUST WHAT WE NEED! THE BLATHERING OF A GENETICALLY INFERIOR MIND.
MAKES ONE DOUBT THE WISDOM OF BLACK BOLT'S LIBERAL POLICIES WITH THESE ALPHA PRIMITIVES.
ENOUGH, TIMBERIUS, OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YOUR OWN PARDON AT BLACK BOLT'S HAND?
THE PRIMITIVE IS RIGHT, IT IS ALWAYS WISE TO AVOID THE WATCHER AND HIS ENIGMATIC WAYS...
...BUT A MYSTERY AWAITS TO BE UNLOCKED. COME!
IN A MOMENT.
AS FOR YOU, TIMBERIUS, A WARNING: IF YOUR GENETICALLY-SUPERIOR MOUTH EVER BELITTLES THE ALPHA PRIMITIVE AGAIN...
...I SHALL GLADLY STRIP YOUR BARK AND MAKE KINDLING OF YOU. HAVE I MADE MYSELF CLEAR?
OF COURSE, PIETRO. FORGIVE MY INSENSITIVITIES.
MUTANT PIG.
NO GOOD, I SAY. NO GOOD WILL COME OF THIS JOURNEY!

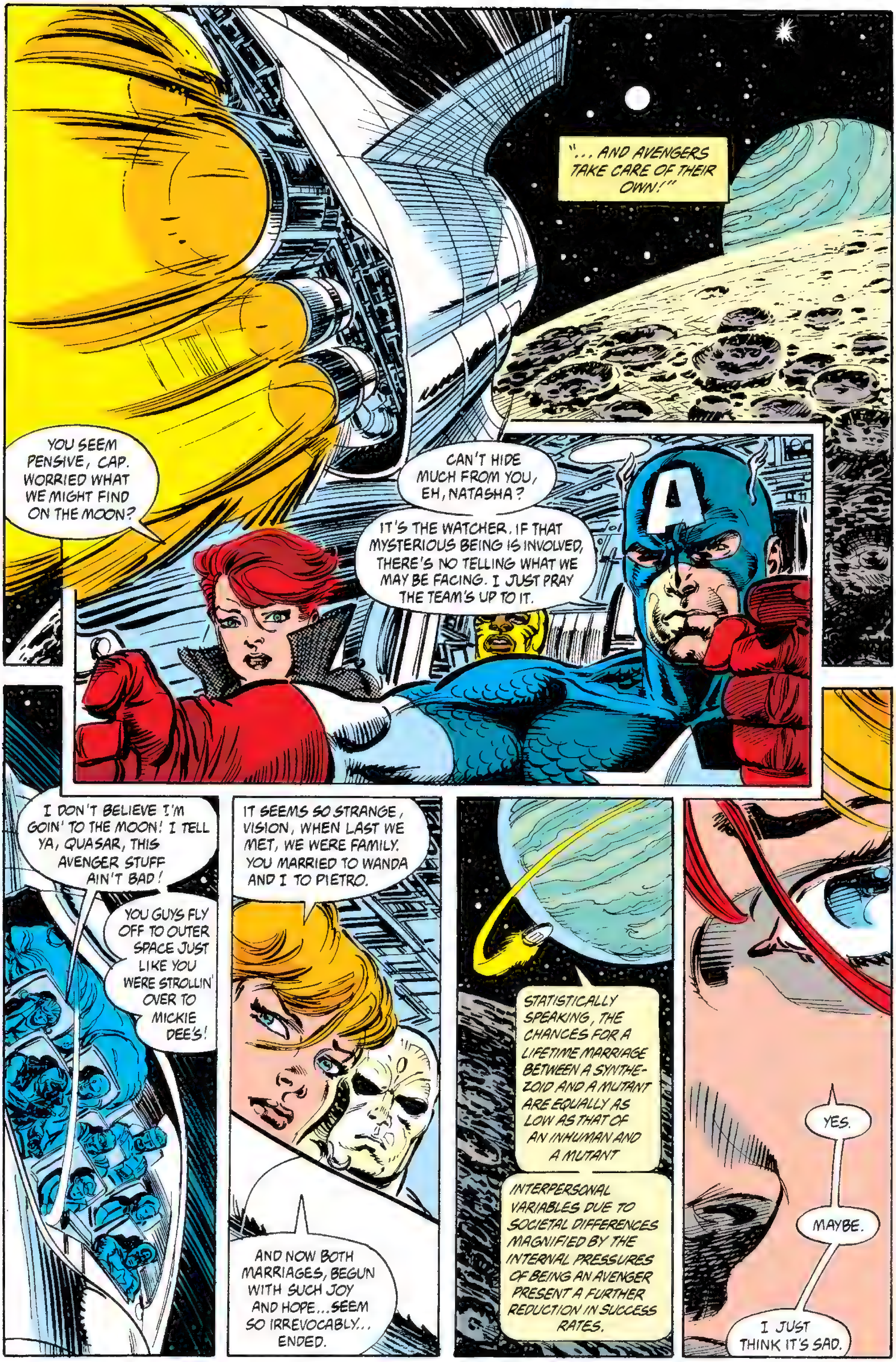

SACRED GENES OF AGON!
DO YOU SEE, BROTHERS? DO YOU *SEE?!*
CALM YOURSELF, KARNAK. HOW CAN WE NOT?
IT IS INCREDIBLE, PIETRO! A STAR VESSEL OF IMMENSE DIMENSIONS!
YET IT IS UNLIKE ANY WE'VE EVER SEEN. IT IS NOT KREE, NOT SKRULL... BUT SOMETHING WONDERFULLY *NEW!*
ER... NOW THAT WE KNOW WHAT IT IS... SHOULDN'T WE GO BACK AND REPORT TO BLACK BOLT?
NOT YET. THERE MAY BE SURVIVORS.
STILL, I THINK THE AVENGERS MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN SOMETHING OF THIS MAGNITUDE...
AVE
BY MAXIMUS THE MAD! WHAT'S HAPPENED??
FZZATTT

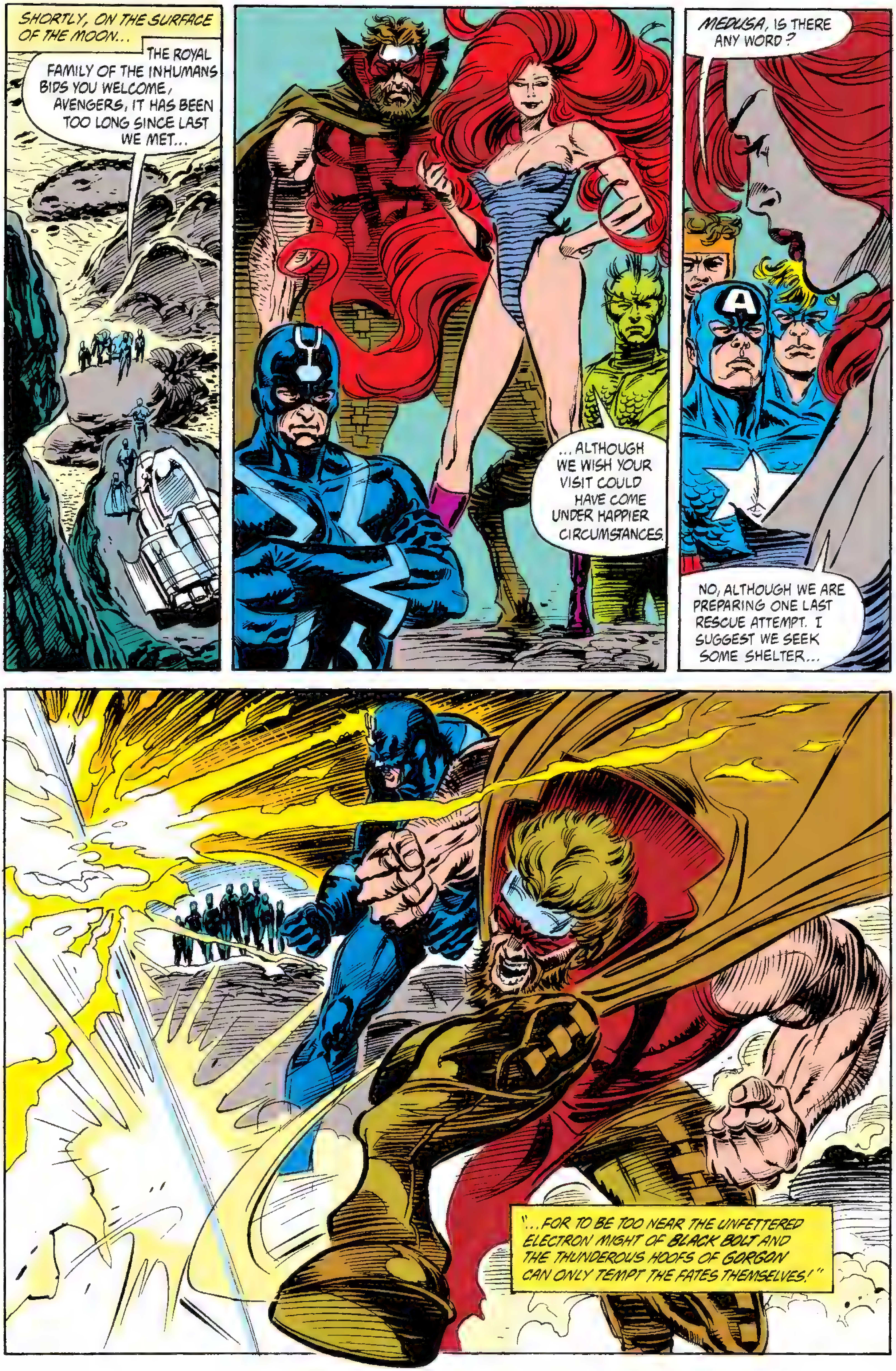

A FORCE FIELD, OBVIOUSLY, TIMBERIUS...
...ONE THAT TRAPS US WITH THAT WRECKED VESSEL, AS WELL AS BLOCKS MY AVENGERS PRIORITY BEAM.
KARNAK, THIS DOES NOT BODE WELL. PERHAPS--
MASTER PIETRO, *LOOK!*
SO THERE *ARE* LIVING BEINGS ON THIS DUSTBOWL OF A WORLD AFTER ALL!
THAT IS GOOD.
FOR EACH NEW PLANET FALL MUST BE SANCTIFIED WITH *NATIVE BLOOD!*

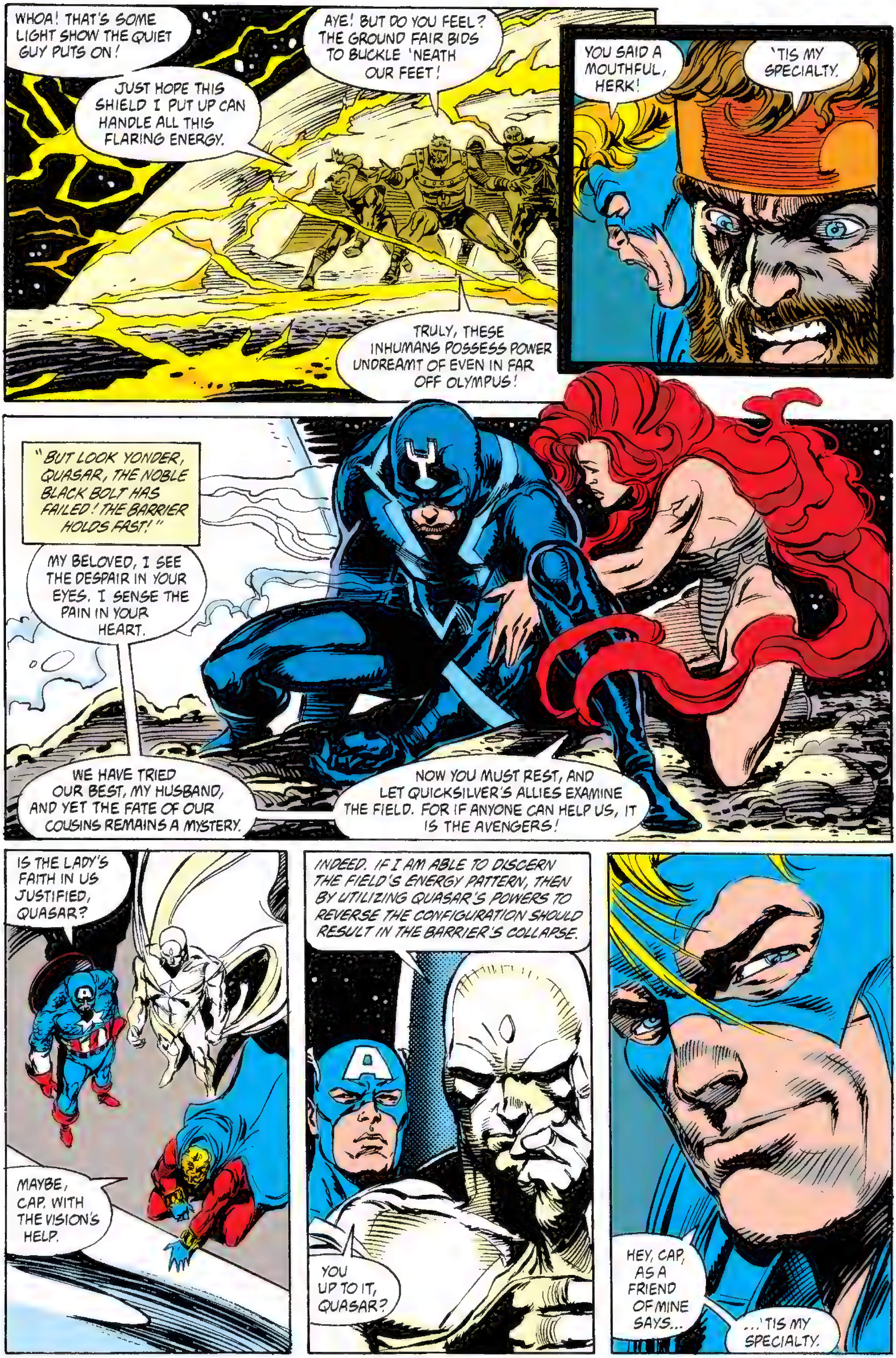

EARTH.
NEW YORK'S FASHIONABLE UPPER EAST SIDE.
SITE OF THE NEWLY-RESTORED AVENGERS MANSION...
HERCULES, ARE YOU SURE RAGE CAN HANDLE THAT MUCH WEIGHT?
BE AT EASE, CAPTAIN AMERICA, THE YOUTH IS STRONG...ALTHOUGH HE DOES NOT APPROACH THAT OF THE PRINCE OF POWER.
I...DUNNO... HERK... YOU'RE REALLY... PUSHIN' IT...
AND I WILL EVER BE AT HIS SIDE IF A MISHAP SHOULD OCCUR.
COME NOW! WHERE IS YOUR SPIRIT? YOUR METTLE?
NOTHING WILL HAPPEN. I AM WITH THEE!
HELLO, TEAMMATES! WORKING OUT? EVERYBODY GETTING THEIR ENDORPHIN FIX? DELIGHTFUL!
BUT REALLY, THESE PACKAGES ARE ENOUGH STRESS FOR ME.
THEN, LOVELY SERSI, LET ME AID THEE!
ER... HERK...
...WHERE A SMALL CONTINGENT OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES ARE ENGAGED IN AN EARLY MORNING'S WORK-OUT...
HERK BABY... MR. HERCULES... HERKSTER...

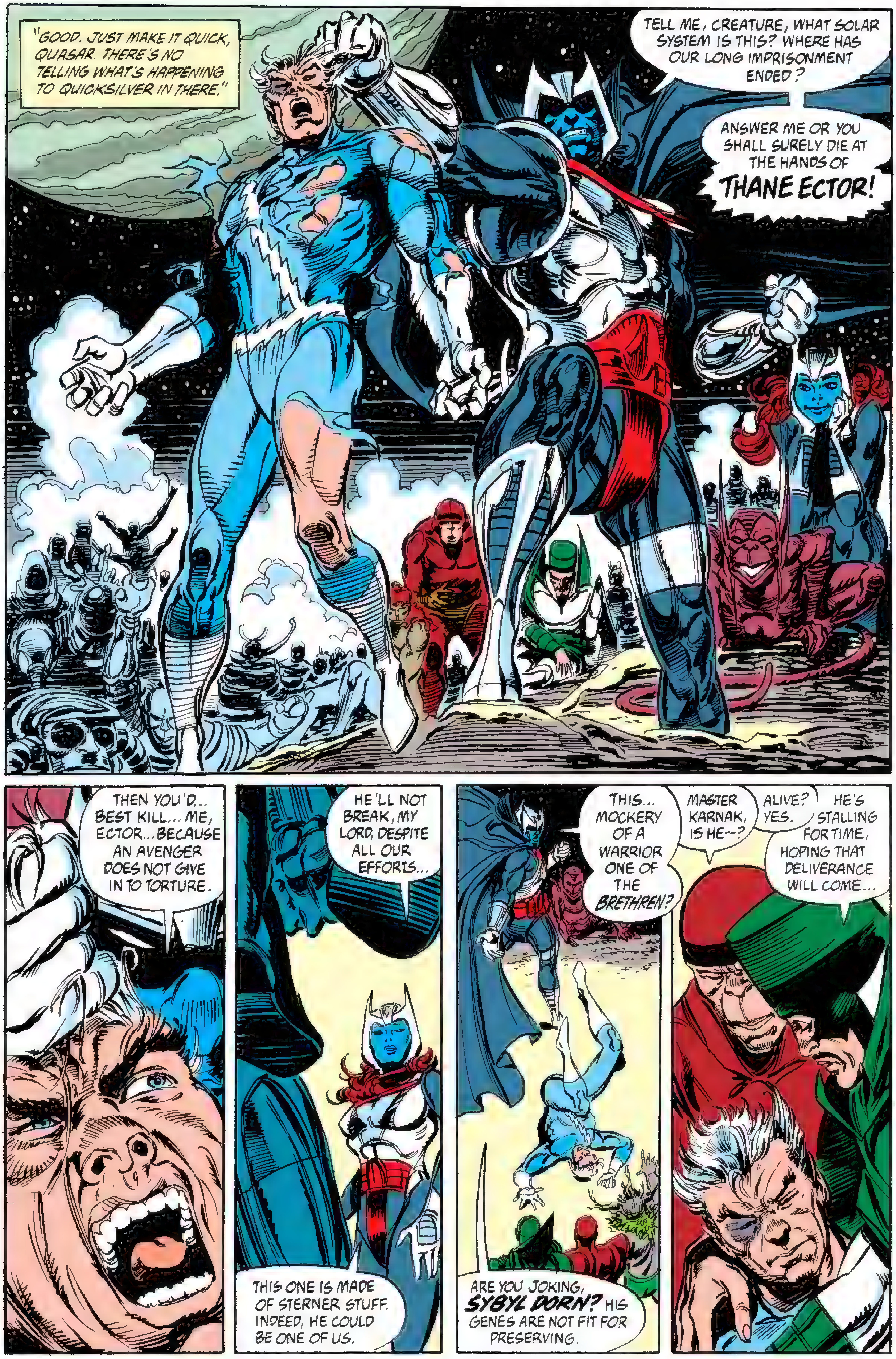
AHNNNN
KALANGG
HEY, YOU WERE SUPPOSED T'BE SPOTTIN' ME, BUDDY!
YES, LAD, BUT THE LOVELY SERSI DIDST NEED MY ATTENTION...
I'LL "DIDST" YOU RIGHT UP--
OK, OK, GUYS, EASE UP!
HERCULES, YOU KNOW BETTER THAN TO--EH, PEGGY?
CAP, WE RECEIVED A TRANSMIT FROM QUICKSILVER THAT ABRUPTLY ENDED A MICROSECOND LATER. WE CAN'T RAISE HIS SIGNAL.
PIETRO? HE WAS ON THE MOON, VISITING HIS DAUGHTER.
LET'S CONTACT ATTILAN, SEE WHAT THEY KNOW.
THAT MAY BE PREMATURE, CAPTAIN. IT DOTH APPEAR THE INHUMANS ARE CONTACTING US!
CRYSTAL!!
THANK ARGON, LOCKJAW, WE MADE IT!

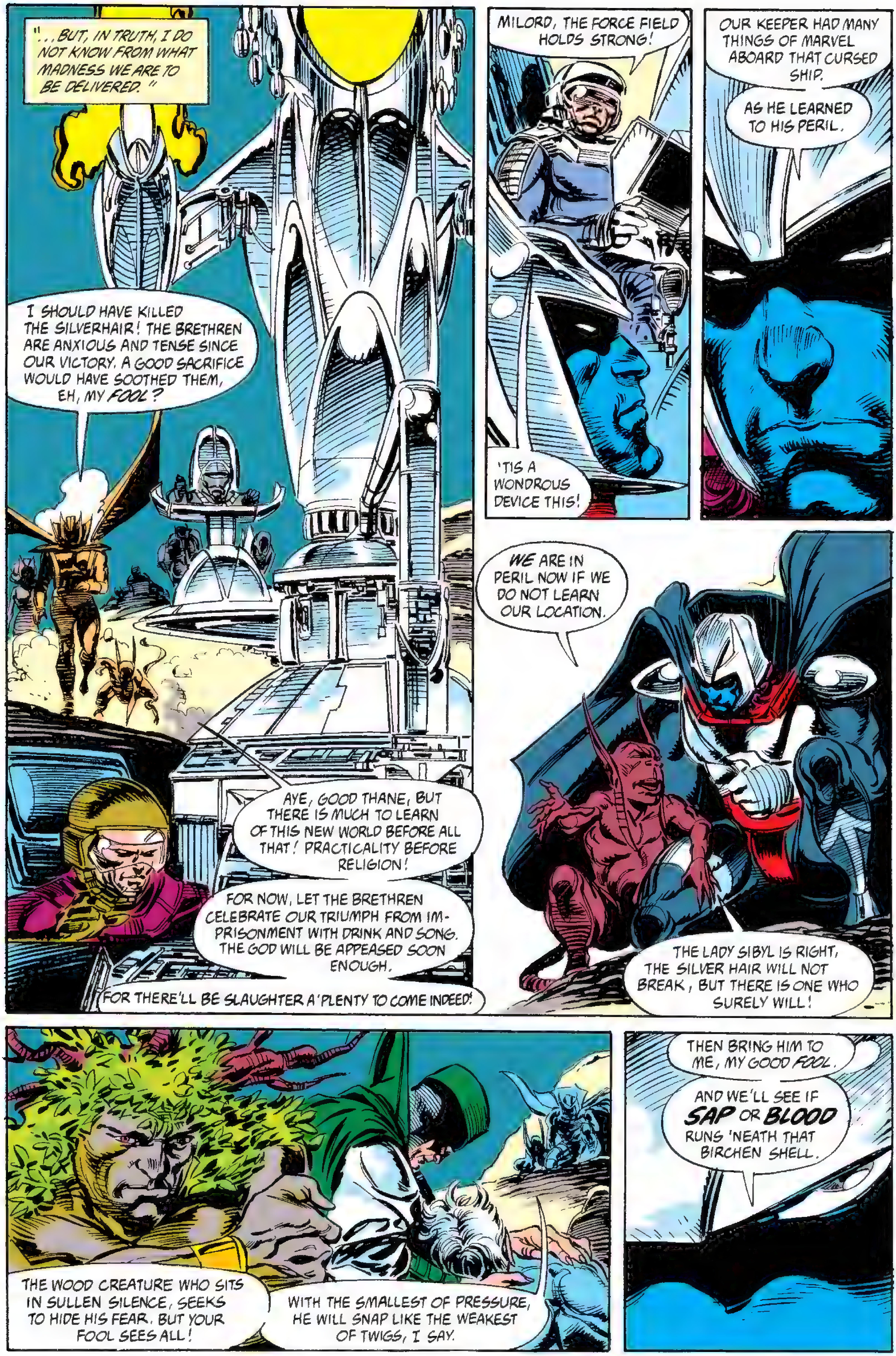

LATER, AT A HASTILY-CALLED STAFF MEETING...
SINCE PIETRO AND THE OTHERS VANISHED BEHIND THE FIELD, WE INHUMANS HAVE TRIED TO PIERCE THE BARRIER...
...ONLY LOCKJAW COULD TELEPORT THROUGH. BUT NO ONE COULD TRAVEL WITH HIM. WE WERE BLOCKED.
NOW THE MORE SENSITIVE AMONG US ARE BEGINNING TO FEEL A GREAT... CONCERN EMANATING FROM THE WATCHER. HE HASN'T SHOWN HIMSELF, BUT STILL WE FEEL HIS INTEREST.
AND THAT FRIGHTENS US... IF THE WATCHER IS ALARMED, THEN WHAT ARE KARNAK AND PIETRO FACING IN THERE? WHAT!?
ROVER HERE LOOKS PRETTY BEAT, LADY.
YES! POOR THING. PHASING THROUGH EXHAUSTED HIM...
...HE BARELY HAD ENOUGH STRENGTH TO MAKE THIS JUMP TO EARTH.
CRYSTAL, YOU LOOK EXHAUSTED YOURSELF. JARVIS COULD READY YOU A ROOM.
NO THANK YOU, CAPTAIN AMERICA... ALL I ASK IS YOUR HELP.
WHY NOT THE FF, PRETTY LADY? AFTER ALL, YOU USED TO BE A MEMBER.
I... PREFER NOT TO BOTHER JOHNNY STORM AND HIS FAMILY FOR PERSONAL REASONS, QUASAR...
...BESIDES, I THOUGHT PIETRO'S SISTER, WANDA, WOULD BE HERE.
THE SCARLET WITCH IS A MEMBER OF OUR WEST COAST CONTINGENT NOW, CRYSTAL. WE'LL INFORM HER OF WHAT'S HAPPENED.
AS FOR HELP, YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO ASK. PIETRO IS AN AVENGER...

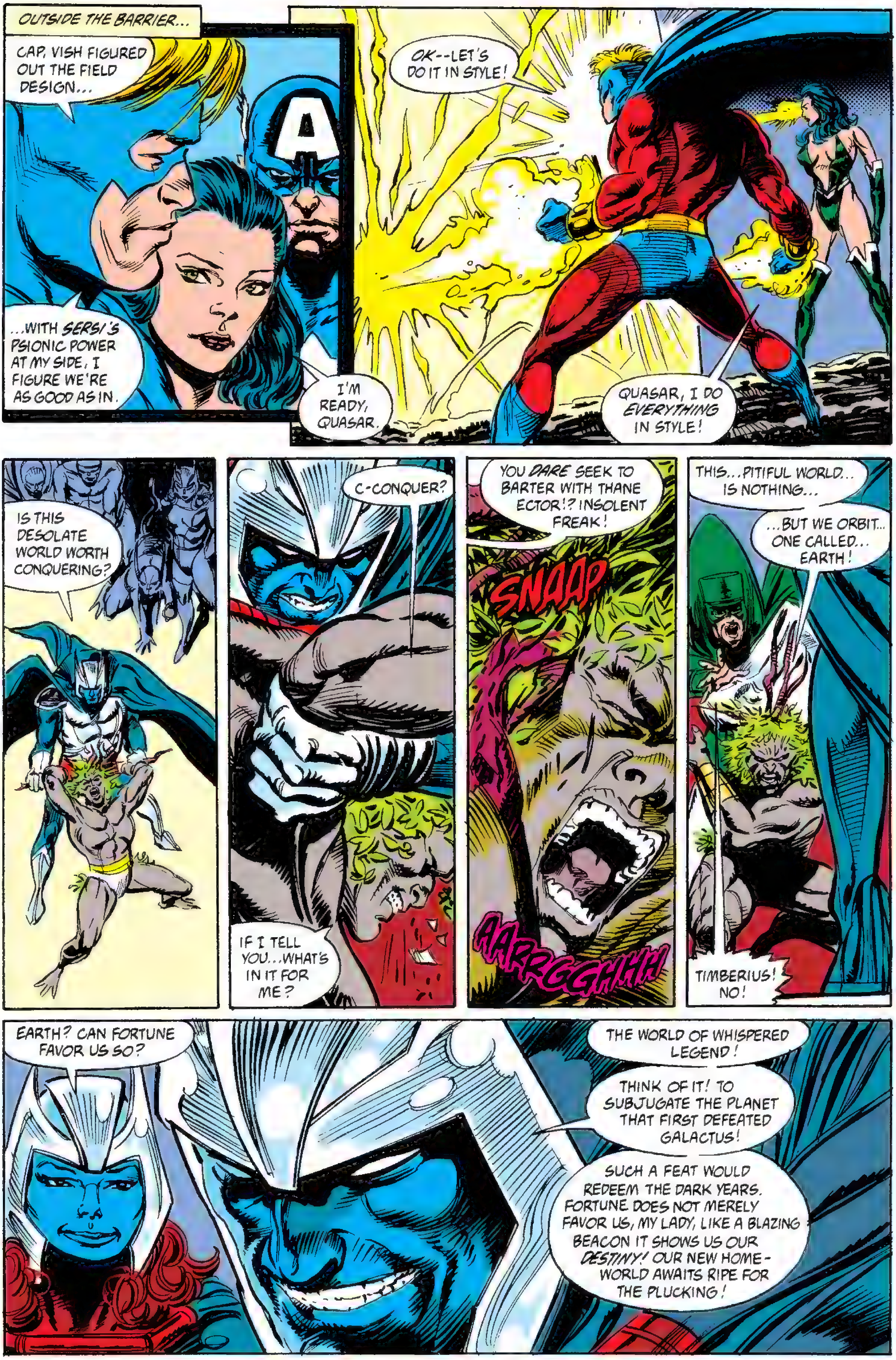

"... AND AVENGERS TAKE CARE OF THEIR OWN!"
YOU SEEM PENSIVE, CAP. WORRIED WHAT WE MIGHT FIND ON THE MOON?
CAN'T HIDE MUCH FROM YOU, EH, NATASHA?
IT'S THE WATCHER. IF THAT MYSTERIOUS BEING IS INVOLVED, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT WE MAY BE FACING. I JUST PRAY THE TEAM'S UP TO IT.
I DON'T BELIEVE I'M GOIN' TO THE MOON! I TELL YA, QUASAR, THIS AVENGER STUFF AIN'T BAD!
YOU GUYS FLY OFF TO OUTER SPACE JUST LIKE YOU WERE STROLLIN' OVER TO MICKIE DEE'S!
IT SEEMS SO STRANGE, VISION. WHEN LAST WE MET, WE WERE FAMILY. YOU MARRIED TO WANDA AND I TO PIETRO.
AND NOW BOTH MARRIAGES, BEGUN WITH SUCH JOY AND HOPE... SEEM SO IRREVOCABLY... ENDED.
STATISTICALLY SPEAKING, THE CHANCES FOR A LIFETIME MARRIAGE BETWEEN A SYNTHEZOID AND A MUTANT ARE EQUALLY AS LOW AS THAT OF AN INHUMAN AND A MUTANT
INTERPERSONAL VARIABLES DUE TO SOCIETAL DIFFERENCES MAGNIFIED BY THE INTERNAL PRESSURES OF BEING AN AVENGER PRESENT A FURTHER REDUCTION IN SUCCESS RATES.
YES.
MAYBE.
I JUST THINK IT'S SAD.

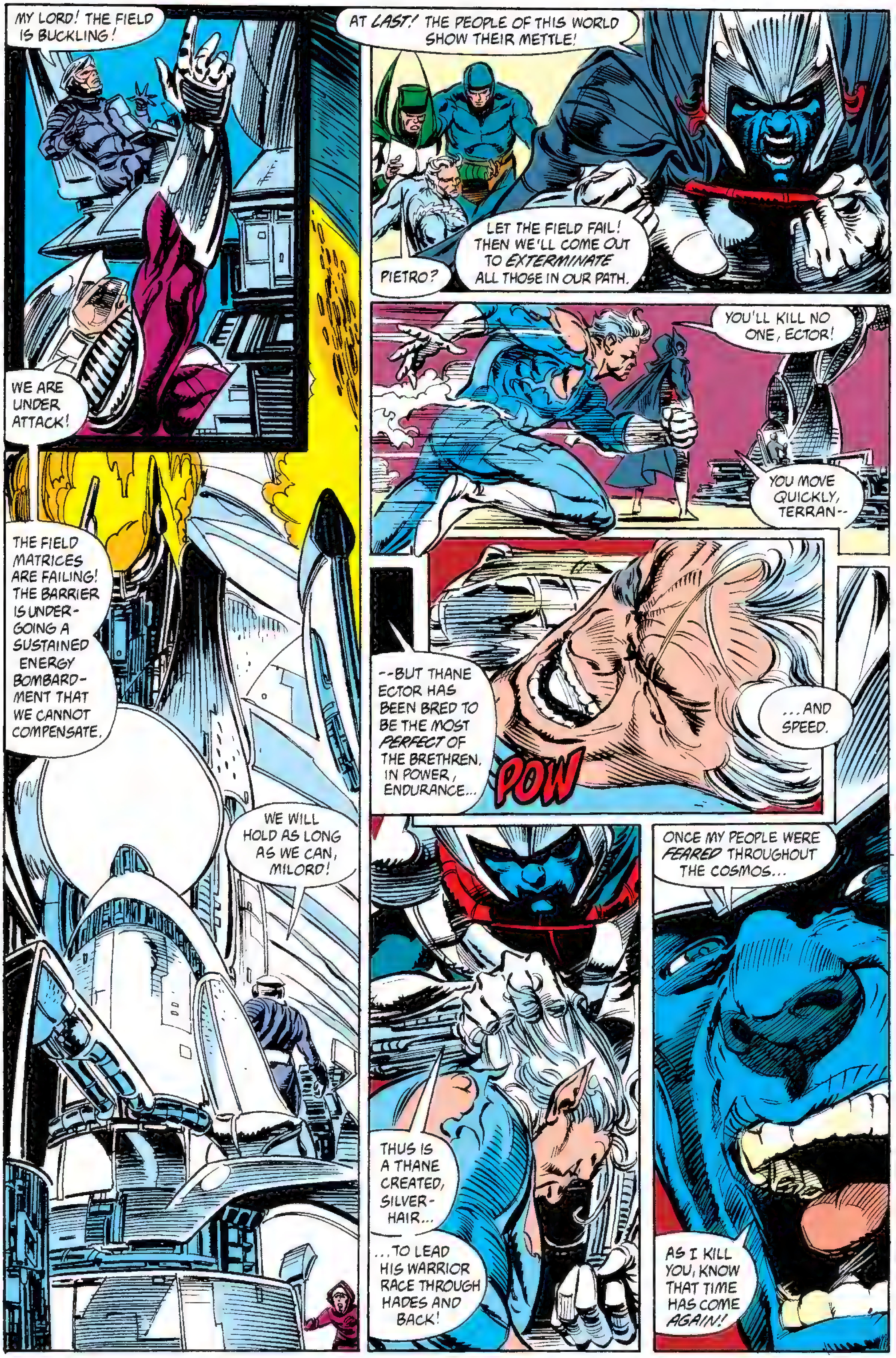

SHORTLY, ON THE SURFACE OF THE MOON...
THE ROYAL FAMILY OF THE INHUMANS BIDS YOU WELCOME, AVENGERS, IT HAS BEEN TOO LONG SINCE LAST WE MET...
...ALTHOUGH WE WISH YOUR VISIT COULD HAVE COME UNDER HAPPIER CIRCUMSTANCES.
MEDUSA, IS THERE ANY WORD?
NO, ALTHOUGH WE ARE PREPARING ONE LAST RESCUE ATTEMPT. I SUGGEST WE SEEK SOME SHELTER...
"...FOR TO BE TOO NEAR THE UNFETTERED ELECTRON MIGHT OF BLACK BOLT AND THE THUNDEROUS HOOFS OF GORGON CAN ONLY TEMPT THE FATES THEMSELVES!"

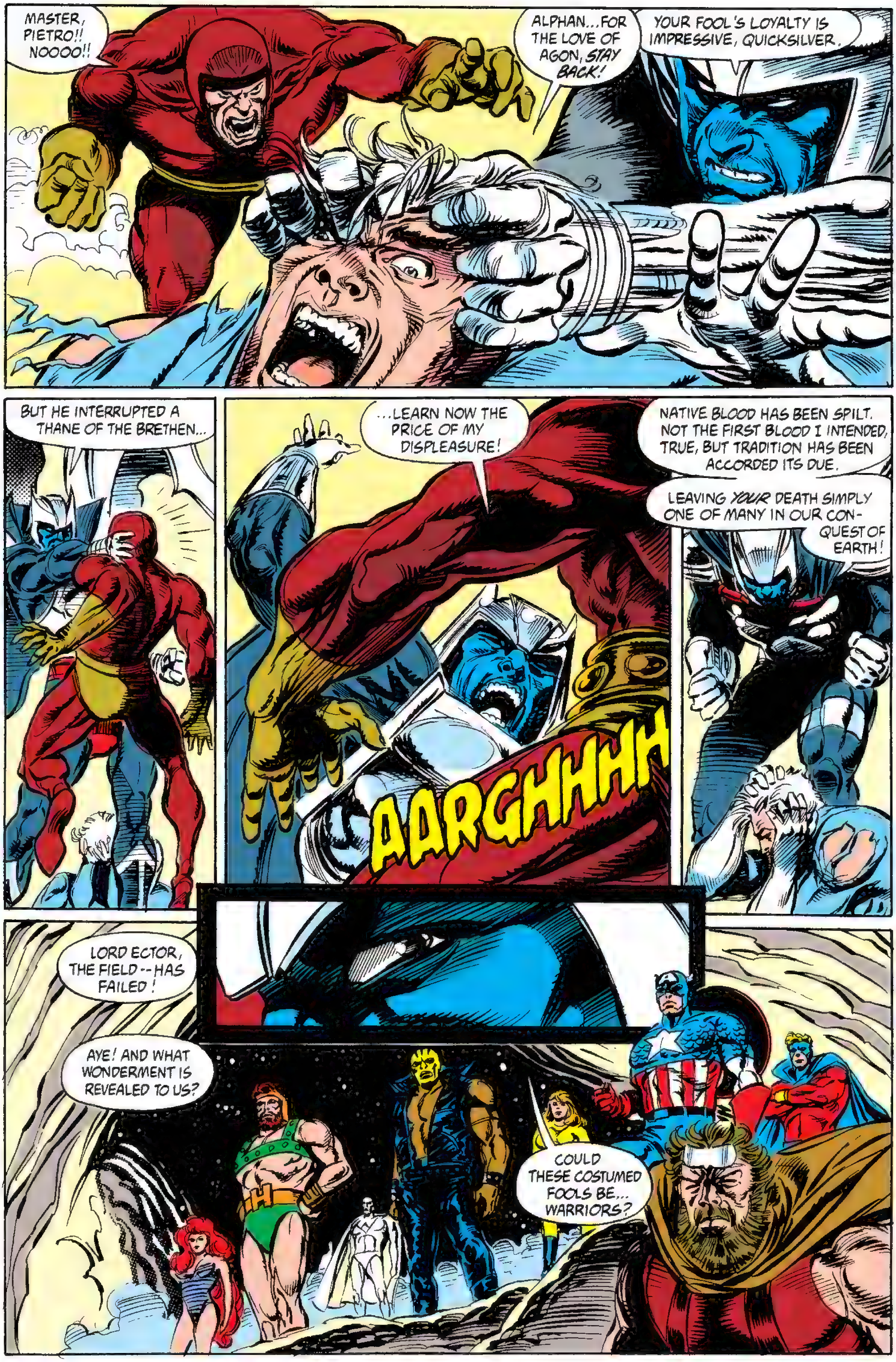

WHOA! THAT'S SOME LIGHT SHOW THE QUIET GUY PUTS ON!
JUST HOPE THIS SHIELD I PUT UP CAN HANDLE ALL THIS FLARING ENERGY.
AYE! BUT DO YOU FEEL? THE GROUND FAIR BIDS TO BUCKLE 'NEATH OUR FEET!
TRULY, THESE INHUMANS POSSESS POWER UNDREAMT OF EVEN IN FAR OFF OLYMPUS!
YOU SAID A MOUTHFUL, HERK!
'TIS MY SPECIALTY.
"BUT LOOK YONDER, QUASAR, THE NOBLE BLACK BOLT HAS FAILED! THE BARRIER HOLDS FAST!"
MY BELOVED, I SEE THE DESPAIR IN YOUR EYES. I SENSE THE PAIN IN YOUR HEART.
WE HAVE TRIED OUR BEST, MY HUSBAND, AND YET THE FATE OF OUR COUSINS REMAINS A MYSTERY.
NOW YOU MUST REST, AND LET QUICKSILVER'S ALLIES EXAMINE THE FIELD. FOR IF ANYONE CAN HELP US, IT IS THE AVENGERS!
IS THE LADY'S FAITH IN US JUSTIFIED, QUASAR?
MAYBE, CAP. WITH THE VISION'S HELP.
INDEED. IF I AM ABLE TO DISCERN THE FIELD'S ENERGY PATTERN, THEN BY UTILIZING QUASAR'S POWERS TO REVERSE THE CONFIGURATION SHOULD RESULT IN THE BARRIER'S COLLAPSE.
YOU UP TO IT, QUASAR?
HEY, CAP, AS A FRIEND OF MINE SAYS...
...'TIS MY SPECIALTY.

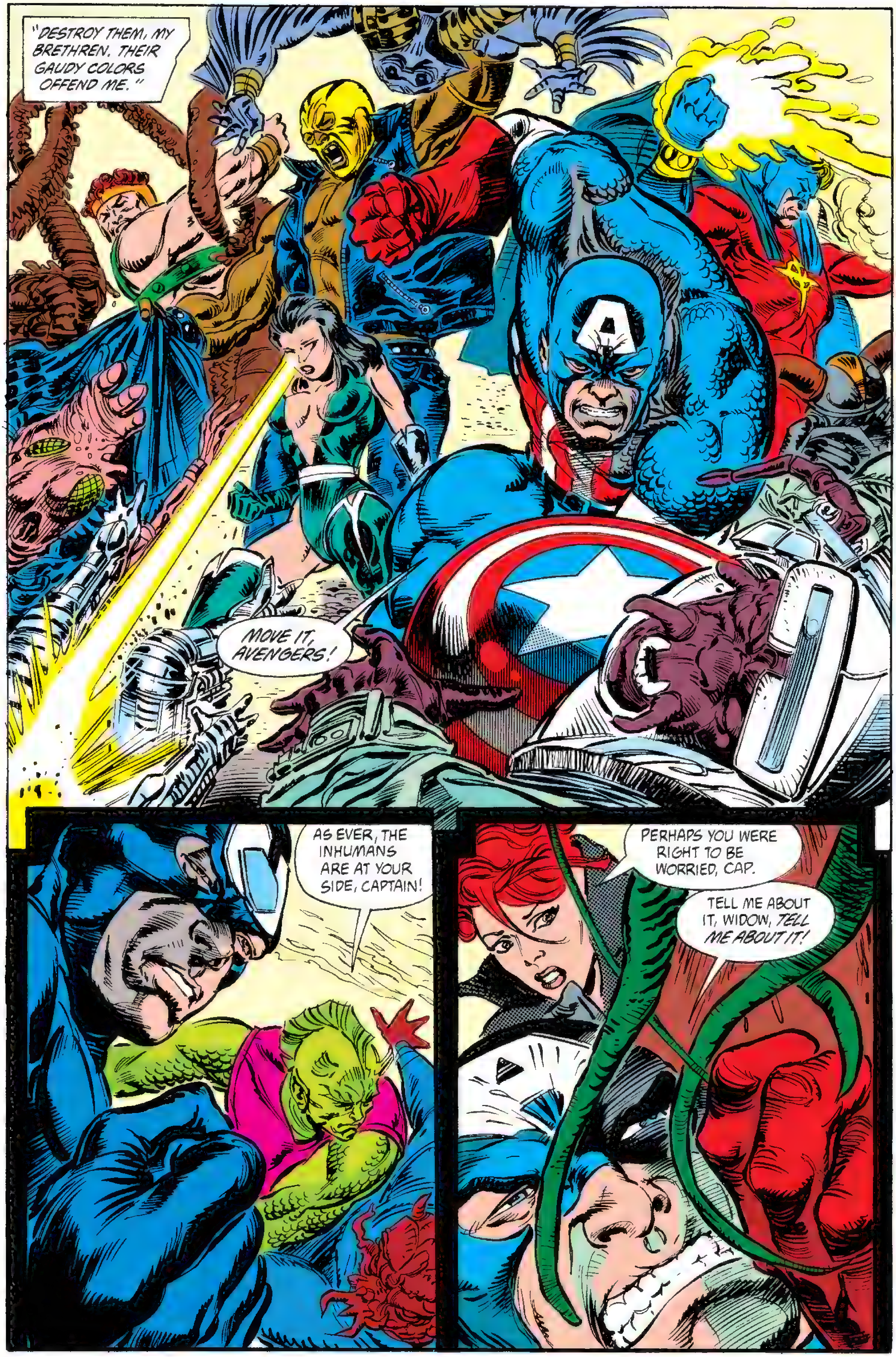

"GOOD. JUST MAKE IT QUICK, QUASAR. THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT'S HAPPENING TO QUICKSILVER IN THERE."
TELL ME, CREATURE, WHAT SOLAR SYSTEM IS THIS? WHERE HAS OUR LONG IMPRISONMENT ENDED?
ANSWER ME OR YOU SHALL SURELY DIE AT THE HANDS OF **THANE ECTOR!**
THEN YOU'D... BEST KILL... ME, ECTOR... BECAUSE AN AVENGER DOES NOT GIVE IN TO TORTURE.
HE'LL NOT BREAK, MY LORD, DESPITE ALL OUR EFFORTS...
THIS ONE IS MADE OF STERNER STUFF. INDEED, HE COULD BE ONE OF US.
THIS... MOCKERY OF A WARRIOR ONE OF THE *BRETHREN?*
ARE YOU JOKING, ***SYBYL DORN?*** HIS GENES ARE NOT FIT FOR PRESERVING.
MASTER KARNAK, IS HE--?
ALIVE? YES.
HE'S STALLING FOR TIME, HOPING THAT DELIVERANCE WILL COME...

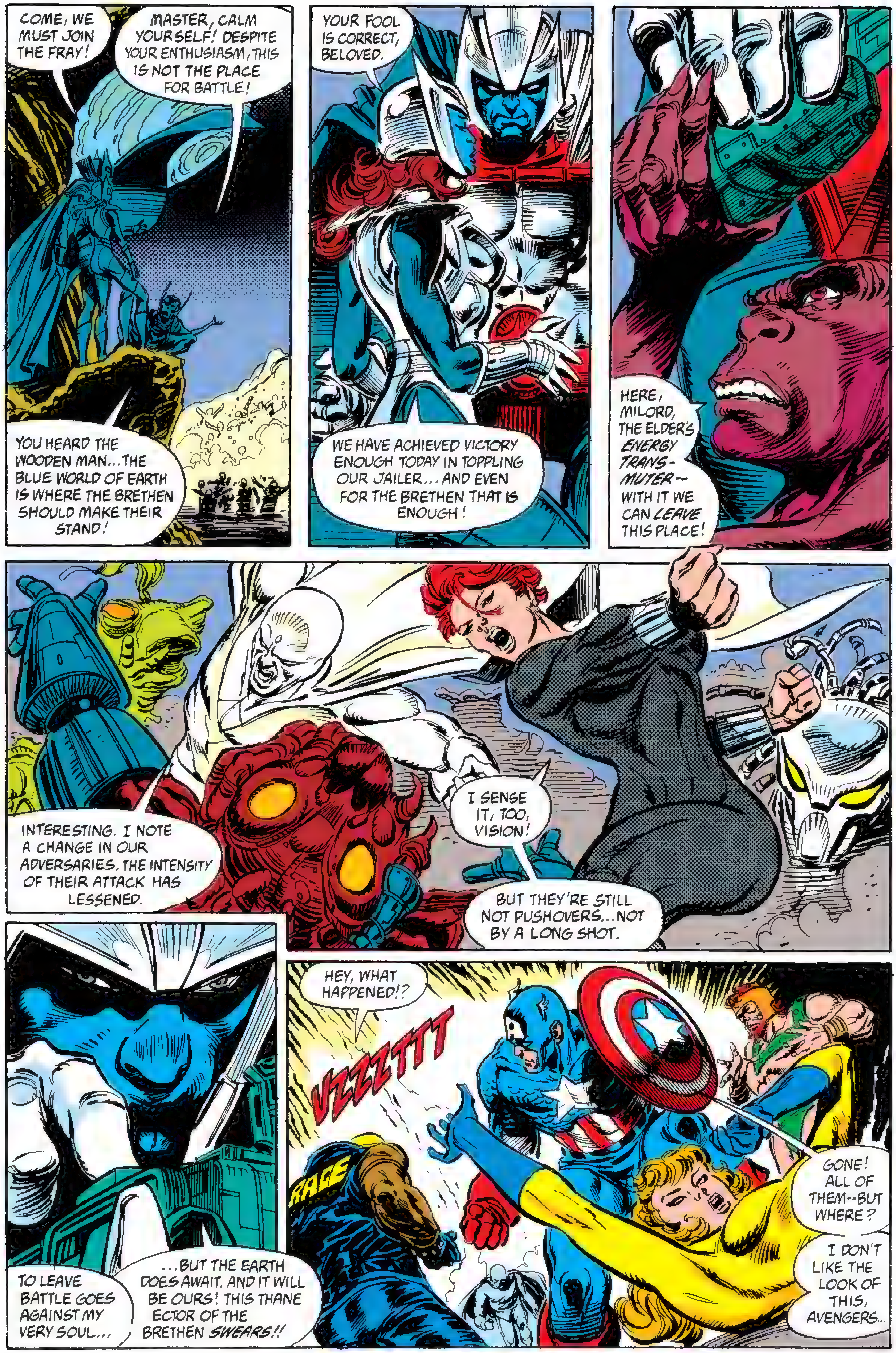

"...BUT, IN TRUTH, I DO NOT KNOW FROM WHAT MADNESS WE ARE TO BE DELIVERED."
I SHOULD HAVE KILLED THE SILVERHAIR! THE BRETHREN ARE ANXIOUS AND TENSE SINCE OUR VICTORY. A GOOD SACRIFICE WOULD HAVE SOOTHED THEM, EH, MY *FOOL*?
AYE, GOOD THANE, BUT THERE IS MUCH TO LEARN OF THIS NEW WORLD BEFORE ALL THAT! PRACTICALITY BEFORE RELIGION!
FOR NOW, LET THE BRETHREN CELEBRATE OUR TRIUMPH FROM IMPRISONMENT WITH DRINK AND SONG. THE GOD WILL BE APPEASED SOON ENOUGH.
FOR THERE'LL BE SLAUGHTER A'PLENTY TO COME INDEED!
MILORD, THE FORCE FIELD HOLDS STRONG!
'TIS A WONDROUS DEVICE THIS!
OUR KEEPER HAD MANY THINGS OF MARVEL ABOARD THAT CURSED SHIP.
AS HE LEARNED TO HIS PERIL.
WE ARE IN PERIL NOW IF WE DO NOT LEARN OUR LOCATION.
THE LADY SIBYL IS RIGHT, THE SILVER HAIR WILL NOT BREAK, BUT THERE IS ONE WHO SURELY WILL!
THE WOOD CREATURE WHO SITS IN SULLEN SILENCE, SEEKS TO HIDE HIS FEAR. BUT YOUR FOOL SEES ALL!
WITH THE SMALLEST OF PRESSURE, HE WILL SNAP LIKE THE WEAKEST OF TWIGS, I SAY.
THEN BRING HIM TO ME, MY GOOD *FOOL*.
AND WE'LL SEE IF ***SAP*** OR ***BLOOD*** RUNS 'NEATH THAT BIRCHEN SHELL.

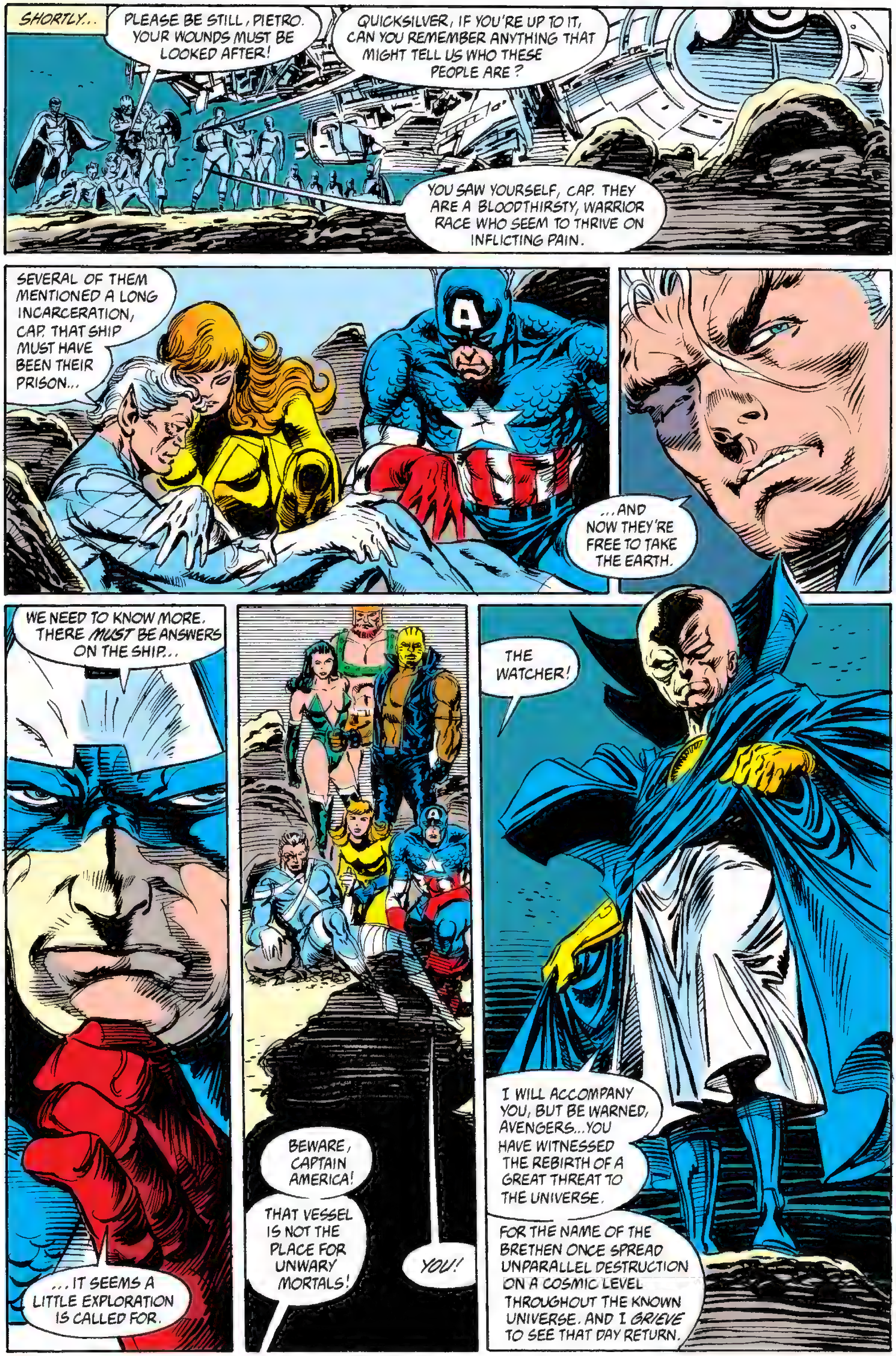

OUTSIDE THE BARRIER...
CAP, VISH FIGURED OUT THE FIELD DESIGN...
...WITH *SERSI'S* PSIONIC POWER AT MY SIDE, I FIGURE WE'RE AS GOOD AS IN.
I'M READY, QUASAR.
OK--LET'S DO IT IN STYLE!
QUASAR, I DO *EVERYTHING* IN STYLE!
IS THIS DESOLATE WORLD WORTH CONQUERING?
C-CONQUER?
IF I TELL YOU...WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?
YOU *DARE* SEEK TO BARTER WITH THANE ECTOR!? INSOLENT FREAK!
SNAAP
AARRGGHHHH
THIS...PITIFUL WORLD... IS NOTHING...
...BUT WE ORBIT... ONE CALLED... EARTH!
TIMBERIUS! NO!
EARTH? CAN FORTUNE FAVOR US SO?
THE WORLD OF WHISPERED LEGEND!
THINK OF IT! TO SUBJUGATE THE PLANET THAT FIRST DEFEATED GALACTUS!
SUCH A FEAT WOULD REDEEM THE DARK YEARS. FORTUNE DOES NOT MERELY FAVOR US, MY LADY, LIKE A BLAZING BEACON IT SHOWS US OUR *DESTINY!* OUR NEW HOME-WORLD AWAITS RIPE FOR THE PLUCKING!

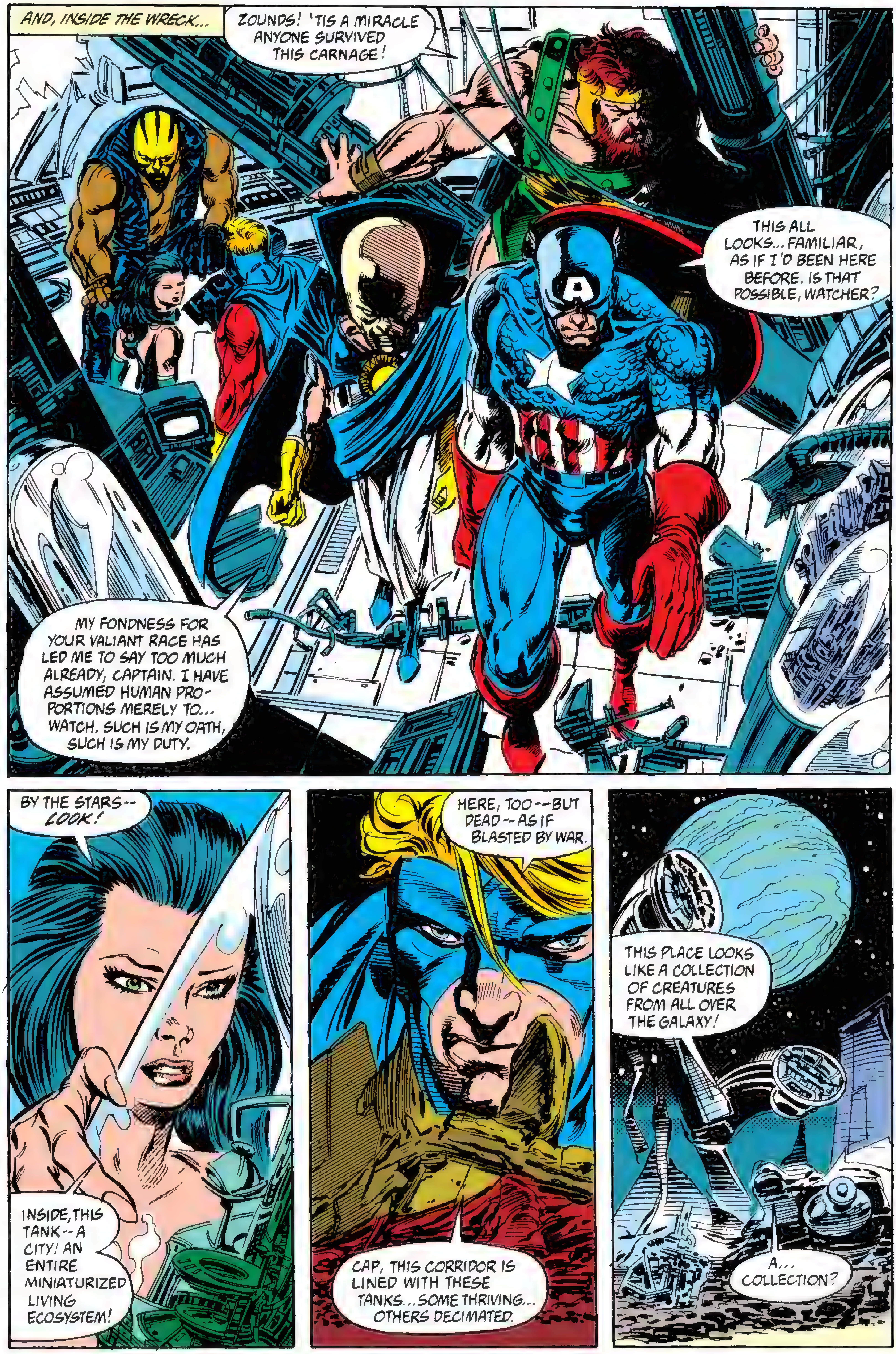

MY LORD! THE FIELD IS BUCKLING!
WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!
THE FIELD MATRICES ARE FAILING! THE BARRIER IS UNDERGOING A SUSTAINED ENERGY BOMBARDMENT THAT WE CANNOT COMPENSATE.
WE WILL HOLD AS LONG AS WE CAN, MILORD!
AT *LAST!* THE PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD SHOW THEIR METTLE!
PIETRO?
LET THE FIELD FAIL! THEN WE'LL COME OUT TO *EXTERMINATE* ALL THOSE IN OUR PATH.
YOU'LL KILL NO ONE, ECTOR!
YOU MOVE QUICKLY, TERRAN--
--BUT THANE ECTOR HAS BEEN BRED TO BE THE MOST *PERFECT* OF THE BRETHREN. IN POWER, ENDURANCE...
POW
...AND SPEED.
THUS IS A THANE CREATED, SILVER-HAIR...
...TO LEAD HIS WARRIOR RACE THROUGH HADES AND BACK!
ONCE MY PEOPLE WERE *FEARED* THROUGHOUT THE COSMOS...
AS I KILL YOU, KNOW THAT TIME HAS COME *AGAIN!*

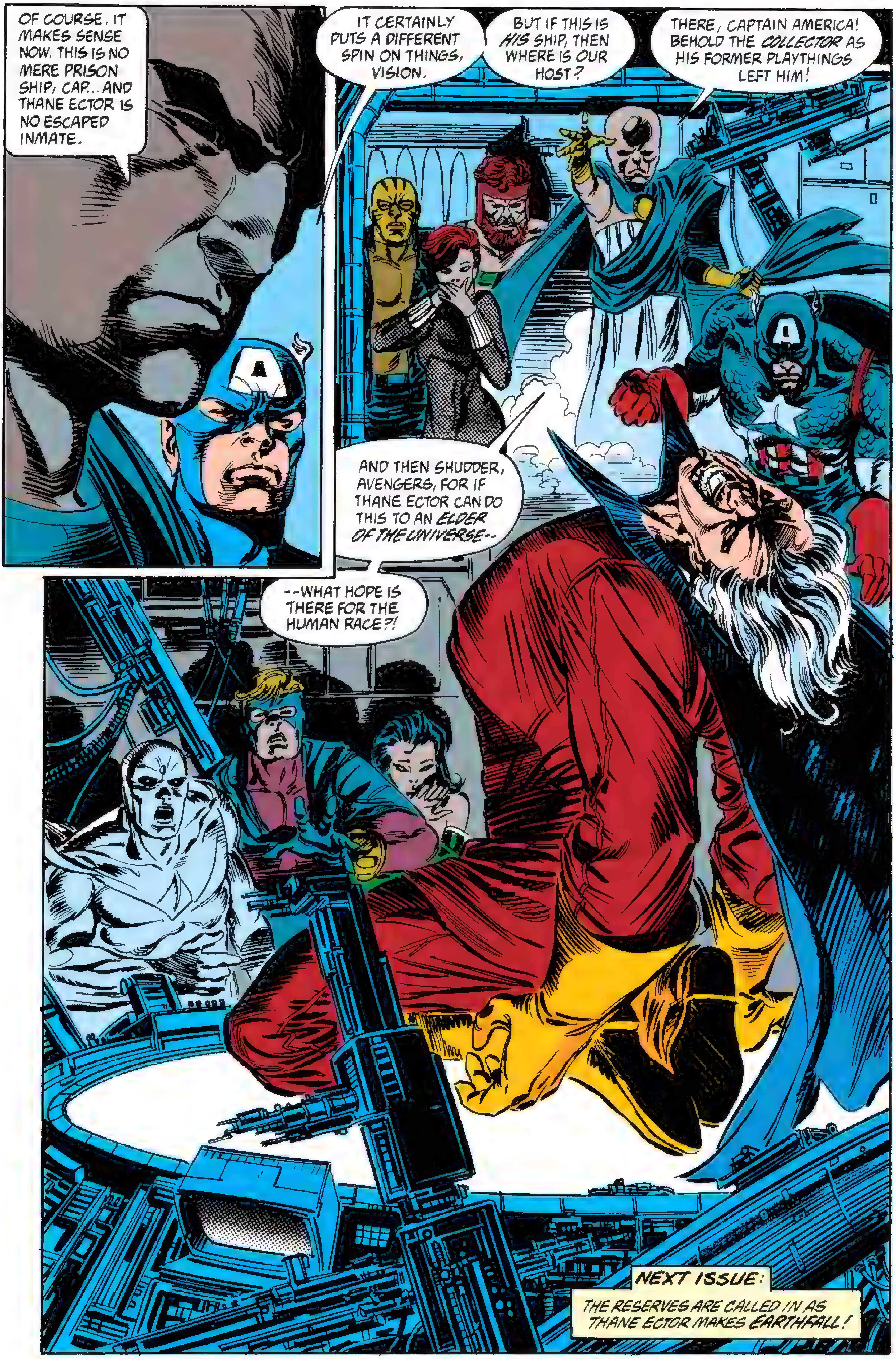

MASTER, PIETRO!! NOOOO!!
ALPHAN...FOR THE LOVE OF AGON, STAY BACK!
YOUR FOOL'S LOYALTY IS IMPRESSIVE, QUICKSILVER.
BUT HE INTERRUPTED A THANE OF THE BRETHEN...
...LEARN NOW THE PRICE OF MY DISPLEASURE!
AARGHHHH
NATIVE BLOOD HAS BEEN SPILT. NOT THE FIRST BLOOD I INTENDED, TRUE, BUT TRADITION HAS BEEN ACCORDED ITS DUE.
LEAVING YOUR DEATH SIMPLY ONE OF MANY IN OUR CONQUEST OF EARTH!
LORD ECTOR, THE FIELD--HAS FAILED!
AYE! AND WHAT WONDERMENT IS REVEALED TO US?
COULD THESE COSTUMED FOOLS BE... WARRIORS?


"DESTROY THEM, MY BRETHREN. THEIR GAUDY COLORS OFFEND ME."
MOVE IT, AVENGERS!
AS EVER, THE INHUMANS ARE AT YOUR SIDE, CAPTAIN!
PERHAPS YOU WERE RIGHT TO BE WORRIED, CAP.
TELL ME ABOUT IT, WIDOW, *TELL ME ABOUT IT!*


COME, WE MUST JOIN THE FRAY!
MASTER, CALM YOURSELF! DESPITE YOUR ENTHUSIASM, THIS IS NOT THE PLACE FOR BATTLE!
YOU HEARD THE WOODEN MAN... THE BLUE WORLD OF EARTH IS WHERE THE BRETHEN SHOULD MAKE THEIR STAND!
YOUR FOOL IS CORRECT, BELOVED.
WE HAVE ACHIEVED VICTORY ENOUGH TODAY IN TOPPLING OUR JAILER... AND EVEN FOR THE BRETHEN THAT IS ENOUGH!
HERE, MILORD, THE ELDER'S ENERGY TRANSMUTER-- WITH IT WE CAN LEAVE THIS PLACE!
INTERESTING. I NOTE A CHANGE IN OUR ADVERSARIES. THE INTENSITY OF THEIR ATTACK HAS LESSENED.
I SENSE IT, TOO, VISION!
BUT THEY'RE STILL NOT PUSHOVERS... NOT BY A LONG SHOT.
TO LEAVE BATTLE GOES AGAINST MY VERY SOUL...
...BUT THE EARTH DOES AWAIT. AND IT WILL BE OURS! THIS THANE ECTOR OF THE BRETHEN SWEARS!!
HEY, WHAT HAPPENED!?
VZZZTTT
RAGE
GONE! ALL OF THEM--BUT WHERE?
I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THIS, AVENGERS...


SHORTLY...
PLEASE BE STILL, PIETRO. YOUR WOUNDS MUST BE LOOKED AFTER!
QUICKSILVER, IF YOU'RE UP TO IT, CAN YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING THAT MIGHT TELL US WHO THESE PEOPLE ARE?
YOU SAW YOURSELF, CAP. THEY ARE A BLOODTHIRSTY, WARRIOR RACE WHO SEEM TO THRIVE ON INFLICTING PAIN.
SEVERAL OF THEM MENTIONED A LONG INCARCERATION, CAP. THAT SHIP MUST HAVE BEEN THEIR PRISON...
...AND NOW THEY'RE FREE TO TAKE THE EARTH.
WE NEED TO KNOW MORE. THERE *MUST* BE ANSWERS ON THE SHIP...
...IT SEEMS A LITTLE EXPLORATION IS CALLED FOR.
BEWARE, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
THAT VESSEL IS NOT THE PLACE FOR UNWARY MORTALS!
YOU!
THE WATCHER!
I WILL ACCOMPANY YOU, BUT BE WARNED, AVENGERS...YOU HAVE WITNESSED THE REBIRTH OF A GREAT THREAT TO THE UNIVERSE.
FOR THE NAME OF THE BRETHEN ONCE SPREAD UNPARALLEL DESTRUCTION ON A COSMIC LEVEL THROUGHOUT THE KNOWN UNIVERSE. AND I *GRIEVE* TO SEE THAT DAY RETURN.


AND, INSIDE THE WRECK...
ZOUNDS! 'TIS A MIRACLE ANYONE SURVIVED THIS CARNAGE!
THIS ALL LOOKS... FAMILIAR, AS IF I'D BEEN HERE BEFORE. IS THAT POSSIBLE, WATCHER?
MY FONDNESS FOR YOUR VALIANT RACE HAS LED ME TO SAY TOO MUCH ALREADY, CAPTAIN. I HAVE ASSUMED HUMAN PROPORTIONS MERELY TO... WATCH. SUCH IS MY OATH, SUCH IS MY DUTY.
BY THE STARS-- LOOK!
INSIDE, THIS TANK--A CITY! AN ENTIRE MINIATURIZED LIVING ECOSYSTEM!
HERE, TOO--BUT DEAD--AS IF BLASTED BY WAR.
CAP, THIS CORRIDOR IS LINED WITH THESE TANKS... SOME THRIVING... OTHERS DECIMATED.
THIS PLACE LOOKS LIKE A COLLECTION OF CREATURES FROM ALL OVER THE GALAXY!
A... COLLECTION?


OF COURSE. IT MAKES SENSE NOW. THIS IS NO MERE PRISON SHIP, CAP... AND THANE ECTOR IS NO ESCAPED INMATE.
IT CERTAINLY PUTS A DIFFERENT SPIN ON THINGS, VISION.
BUT IF THIS IS *HIS* SHIP, THEN WHERE IS OUR HOST?
THERE, CAPTAIN AMERICA! BEHOLD THE *COLLECTOR* AS HIS FORMER PLAYTHINGS LEFT HIM!
AND THEN SHUDDER, AVENGERS, FOR IF THANE ECTOR CAN DO THIS TO AN *ELDER OF THE UNIVERSE*--
--WHAT HOPE IS THERE FOR THE HUMAN RACE?!
NEXT ISSUE:
THE RESERVES ARE CALLED IN AS THANE ECTOR MAKES *EARTHFALL*!

I AM CALLED THE WATCHER. SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL MY RACE HAS DEDICATED ITSELF TO OBSERVING THE WONDERS OF THIS UNIVERSE. NOT A SPECK OF DUST FALLS, THAT WE DO NOT SEE.

WE HAVE WITNESSED GREAT GLORIES – THE BIRTH OF SUNS AND THE DEATH OF WORLDS. MANY AND VARIED ARE THE LIFEFORMS WE HAVE SEEN RISE AND FALL THROUGHOUT THE MILLENNIA. BUT UNIQUE AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THE GALAXY IS THE RACE KNOWN SIMPLY AS THE BRETHREN. THEY FIRST APPEARED FROM THE DEEPEST REACHES OF THE GALAXY OVER 200,000 TERRAN YEARS AGO. IN VAST WARSHIPS THEY PROWLED THE STAR WAYS LIKE HUNGRY WOLVES MAKING PLANET FALL ON UNSUSPECTING, RIPE, GREEN WASHED WORLDS. THEY ARE PEOPLE OF WAR THRIVING ON BATTLE AND CONQUEST.

IT IS HUNGER THAT BURNS WITHIN THEM – A HUNGER THAT IS NEVER SATIATED DESPITE THE DESTRUCTION THEY LEAVE IN THEIR WAKE.

CIVILIZATIONS OF GLORY WERE CUT DOWN IN THEIR PRIME BY THE BRETHREN, WHO PLUNDERED MORE ADVANCED WORLDS FOR THEIR TECHNOLOGY AND KNOWLEDGE BUT NEVER THEIR PEOPLE. FOR THE BRETHREN CONSIDER ALL RACES BENEATH THEM DESERVING ONLY DEATH AND ENSLAVEMENT.

THEY MARRY AND BREED ONLY AMONG THEIR LIMITED NUMBER AND THEIR LEADER, CALLED THE THANE, IS CONSIDERED THE MOST PERFECT OF THE RACE HIS BREEDING JEALOUSLY GUARDED.

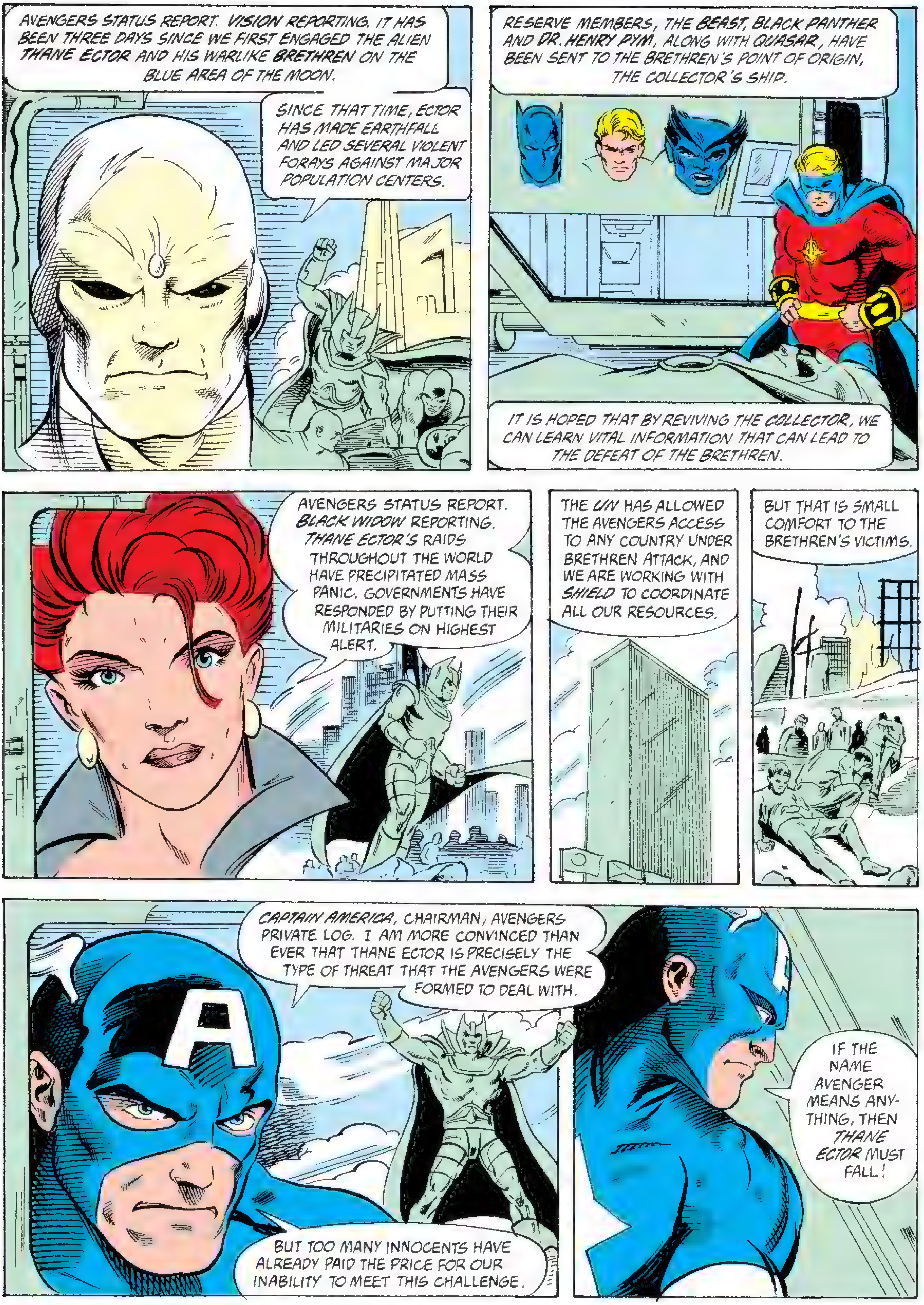
THE UNIVERSE SHUDDERED FOR CENTURIES AT THE COMING OF THE BRETHREN. WORLDS WOULD PRAY TO THEIR GODS FOR DELIVERANCE, BUT THE GODS DID NOT HEAR.

FIVE THOUSAND YEARS AGO THE ELDER KNOWN AS THE COLLECTOR BECAME INTRIGUED BY THIS RACE AND ADDED THEM TO HIS COLLECTION. SUCH IS HIS COSMIC DESTINY, TO PLUCK THAT WHICH INTRIGUES HIM FROM THE UNIVERSE.

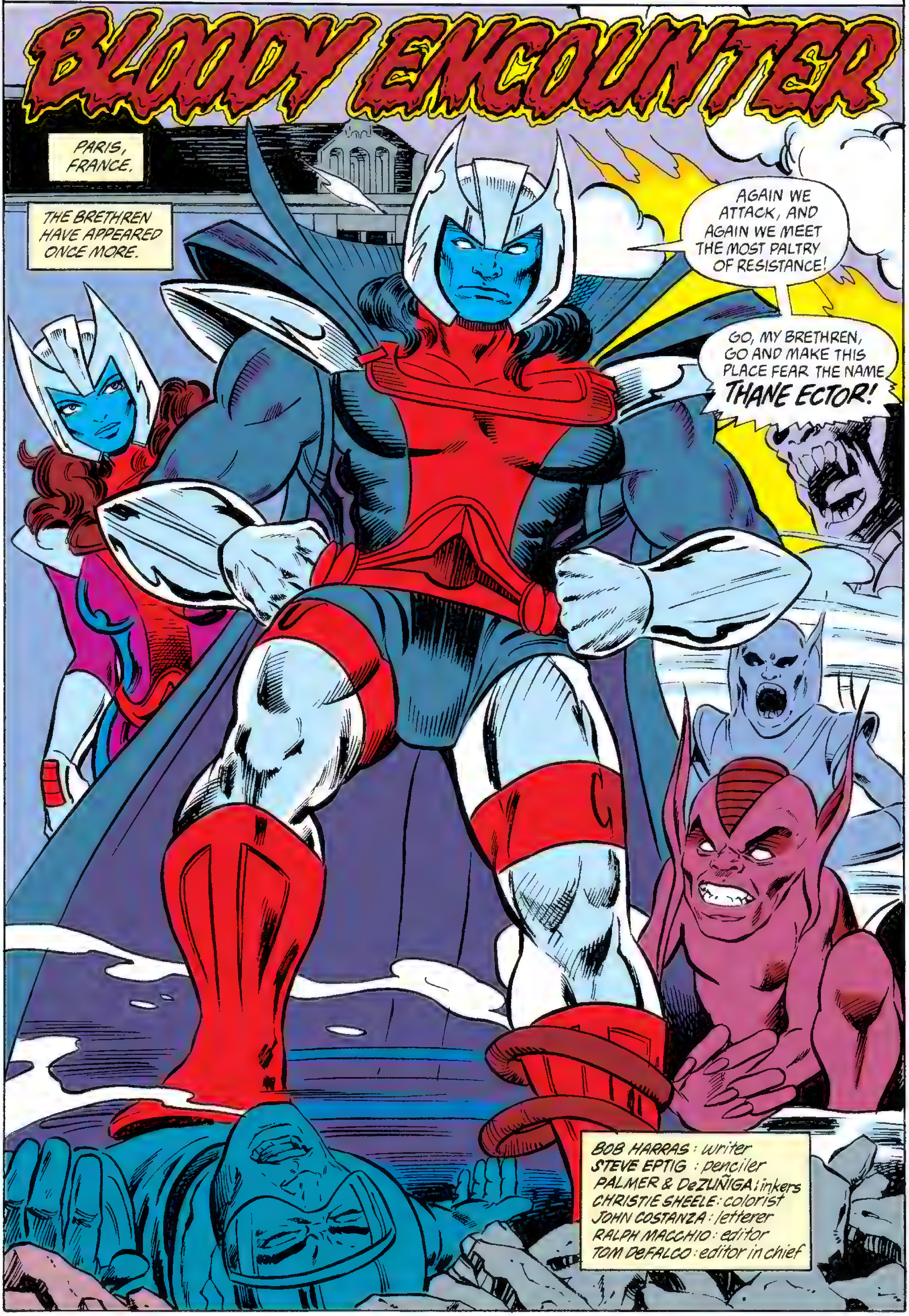
AND FOR FIVE THOUSAND YEARS THE UNIVERSE LIVED WITH ONE LESS THREAT. BUT NOW, THE EVER ADAPTABLE BRETHREN HAVE ESCAPED THEIR PRISON AND ARE FREE ONCE MORE.

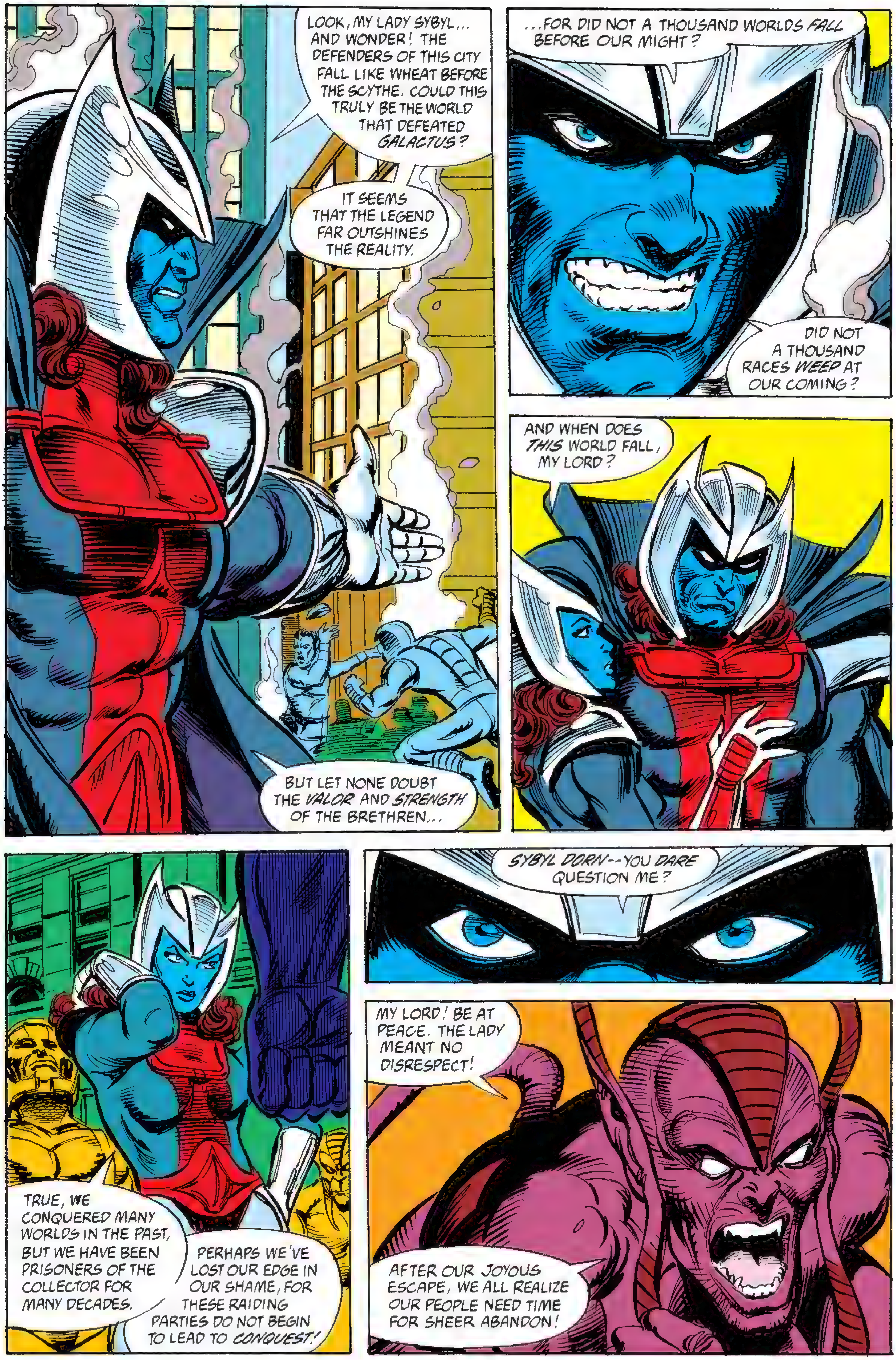
ACROSS THE STARS THE GHOSTS OF THEIRS VICTIMS CRY OUT AND A UNIVERSE WEEPS.

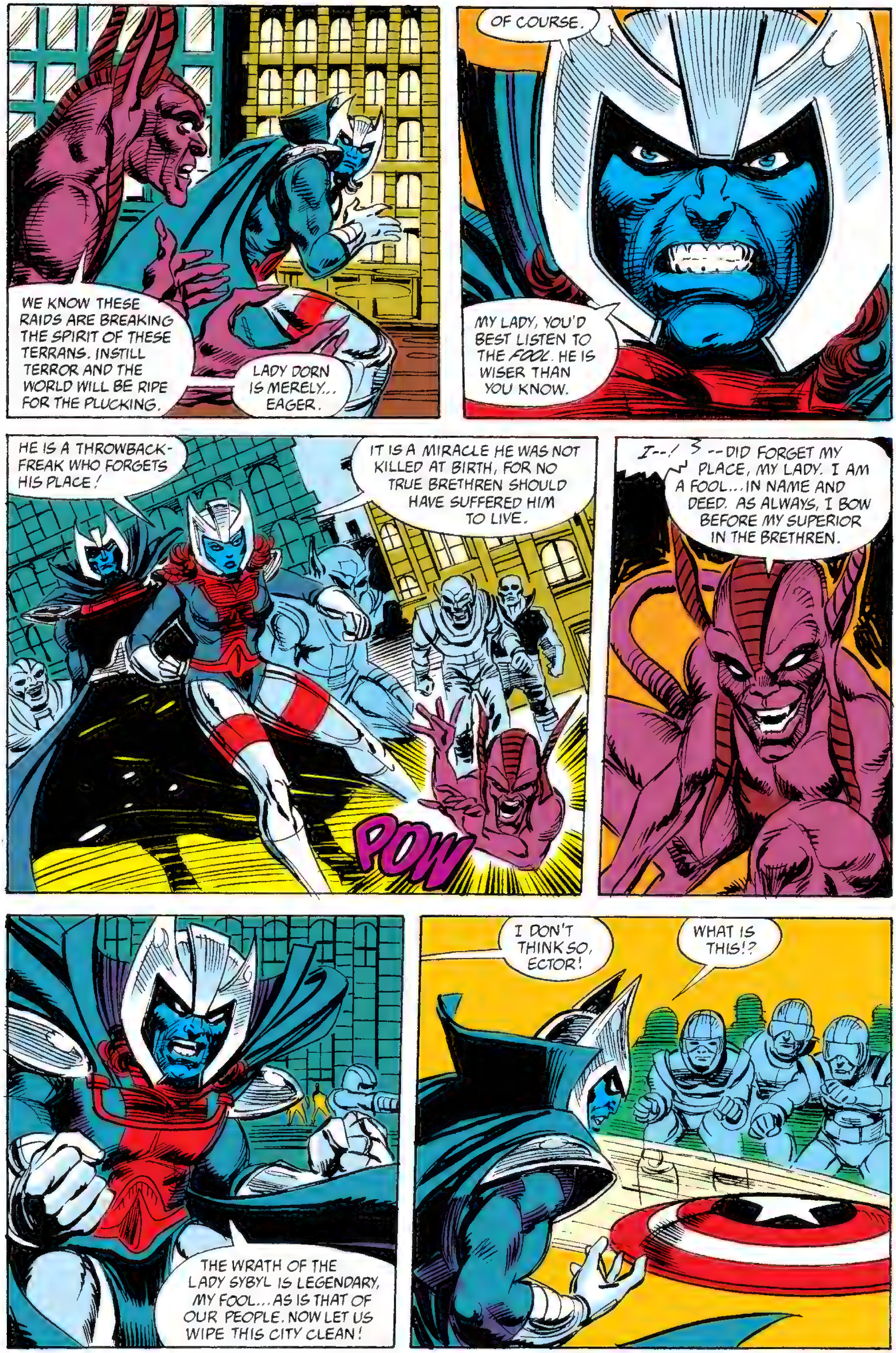
MARVEL COMICS
THE COLLECTION OBSESSION PART 2
AVENGERS
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN
335
EARLY AUG
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
© 1991 MARVEL ENT GROUP, INC
TM
INVADERS FROM SPACE!

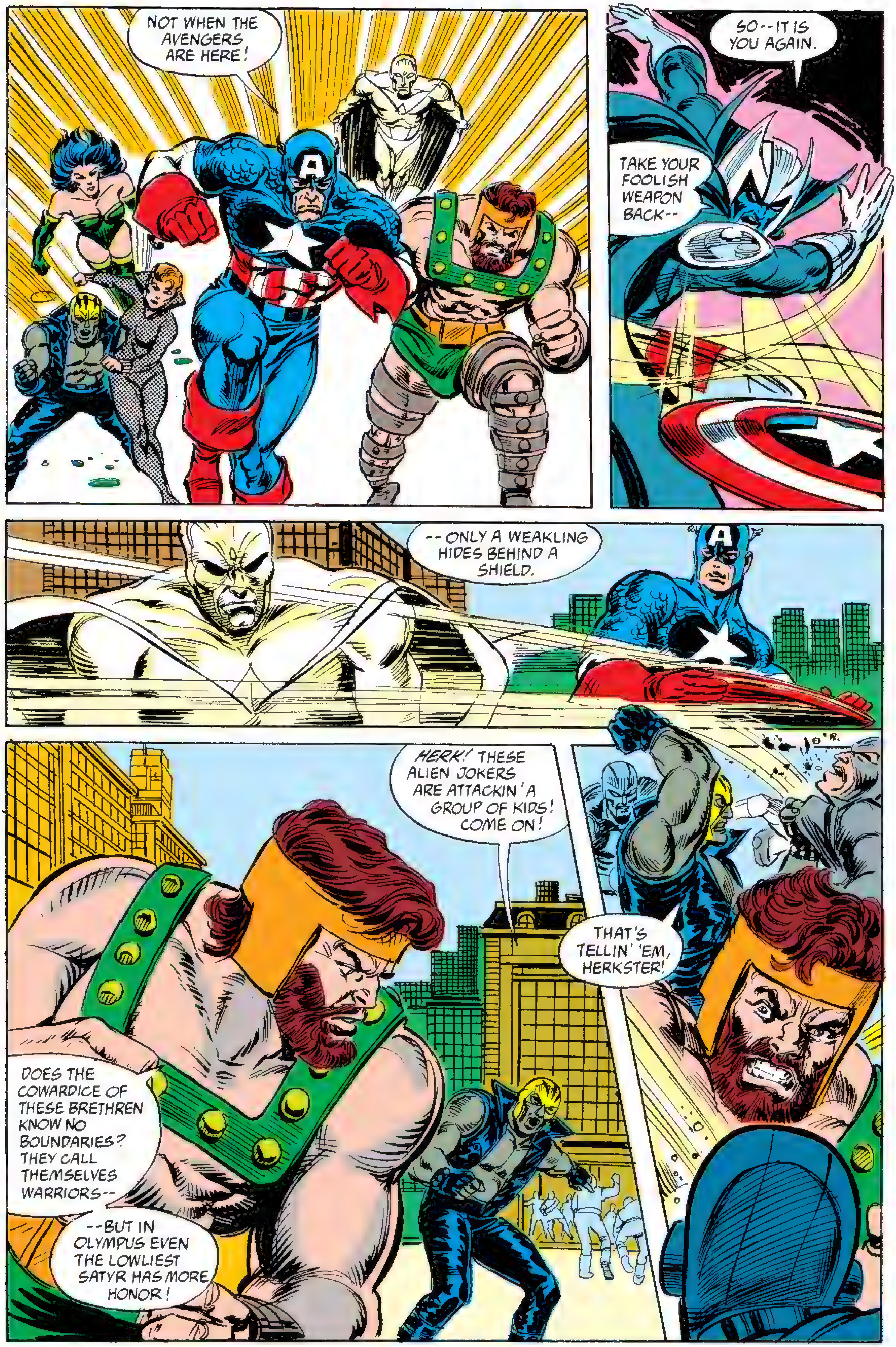

AVENGERS STATUS REPORT. VISION REPORTING. IT HAS BEEN THREE DAYS SINCE WE FIRST ENGAGED THE ALIEN THANE ECTOR AND HIS WARLIKE BRETHREN ON THE BLUE AREA OF THE MOON.
SINCE THAT TIME, ECTOR HAS MADE EARTHFALL AND LED SEVERAL VIOLENT FORAYS AGAINST MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS.
RESERVE MEMBERS, THE BEAST, BLACK PANTHER AND DR. HENRY PYM, ALONG WITH QUASAR, HAVE BEEN SENT TO THE BRETHREN'S POINT OF ORIGIN, THE COLLECTOR'S SHIP.
IT IS HOPED THAT BY REVIVING THE COLLECTOR, WE CAN LEARN VITAL INFORMATION THAT CAN LEAD TO THE DEFEAT OF THE BRETHREN.
AVENGERS STATUS REPORT. BLACK WIDOW REPORTING. THANE ECTOR'S RAIDS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD HAVE PRECIPITATED MASS PANIC. GOVERNMENTS HAVE RESPONDED BY PUTTING THEIR MILITARIES ON HIGHEST ALERT.
THE UN HAS ALLOWED THE AVENGERS ACCESS TO ANY COUNTRY UNDER BRETHREN ATTACK, AND WE ARE WORKING WITH SHIELD TO COORDINATE ALL OUR RESOURCES.
BUT THAT IS SMALL COMFORT TO THE BRETHREN'S VICTIMS.
CAPTAIN AMERICA, CHAIRMAN, AVENGERS PRIVATE LOG. I AM MORE CONVINCED THAN EVER THAT THANE ECTOR IS PRECISELY THE TYPE OF THREAT THAT THE AVENGERS WERE FORMED TO DEAL WITH.
BUT TOO MANY INNOCENTS HAVE ALREADY PAID THE PRICE FOR OUR INABILITY TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE.
IF THE NAME AVENGER MEANS ANYTHING, THEN THANE ECTOR MUST FALL!

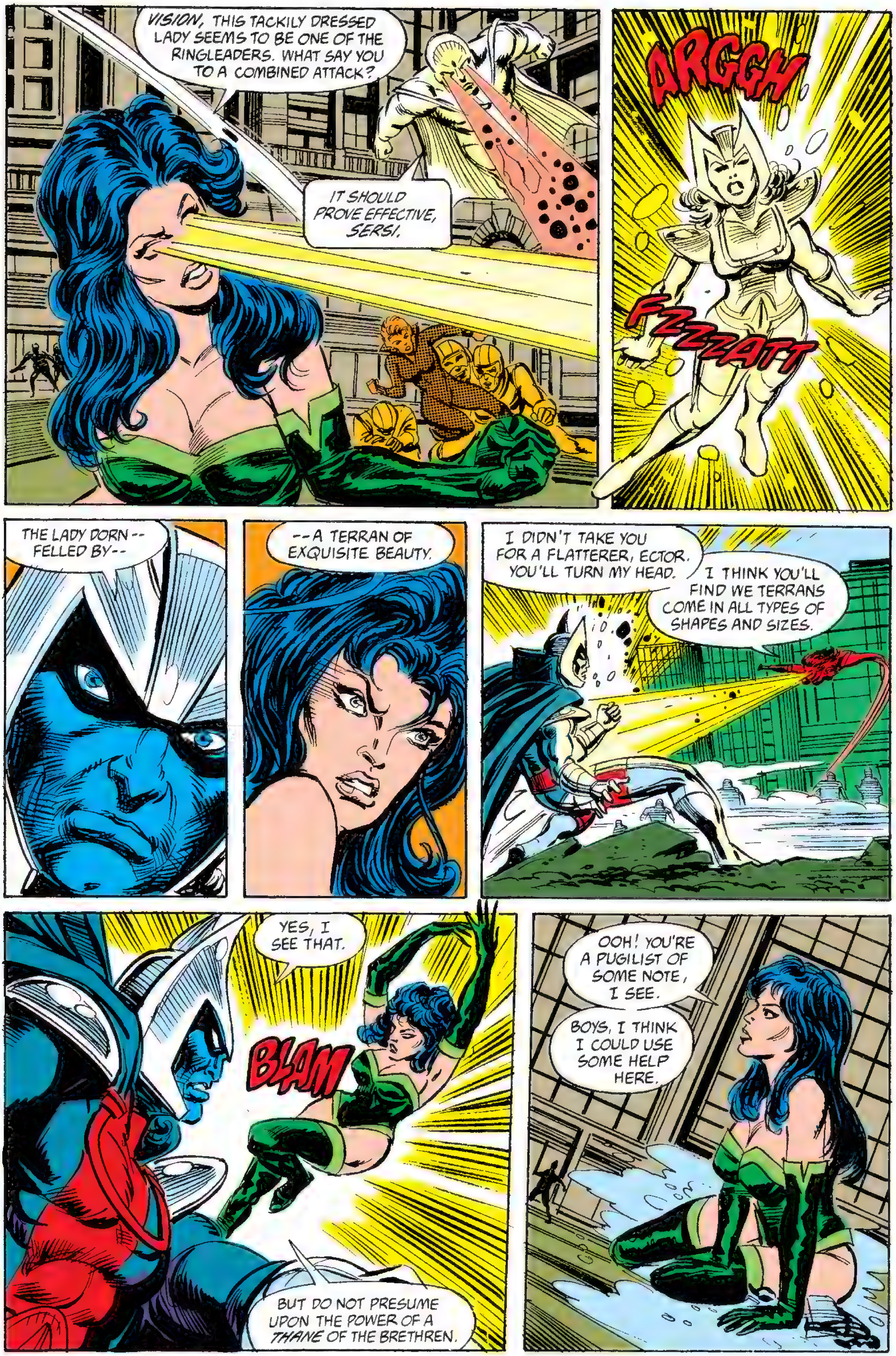
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

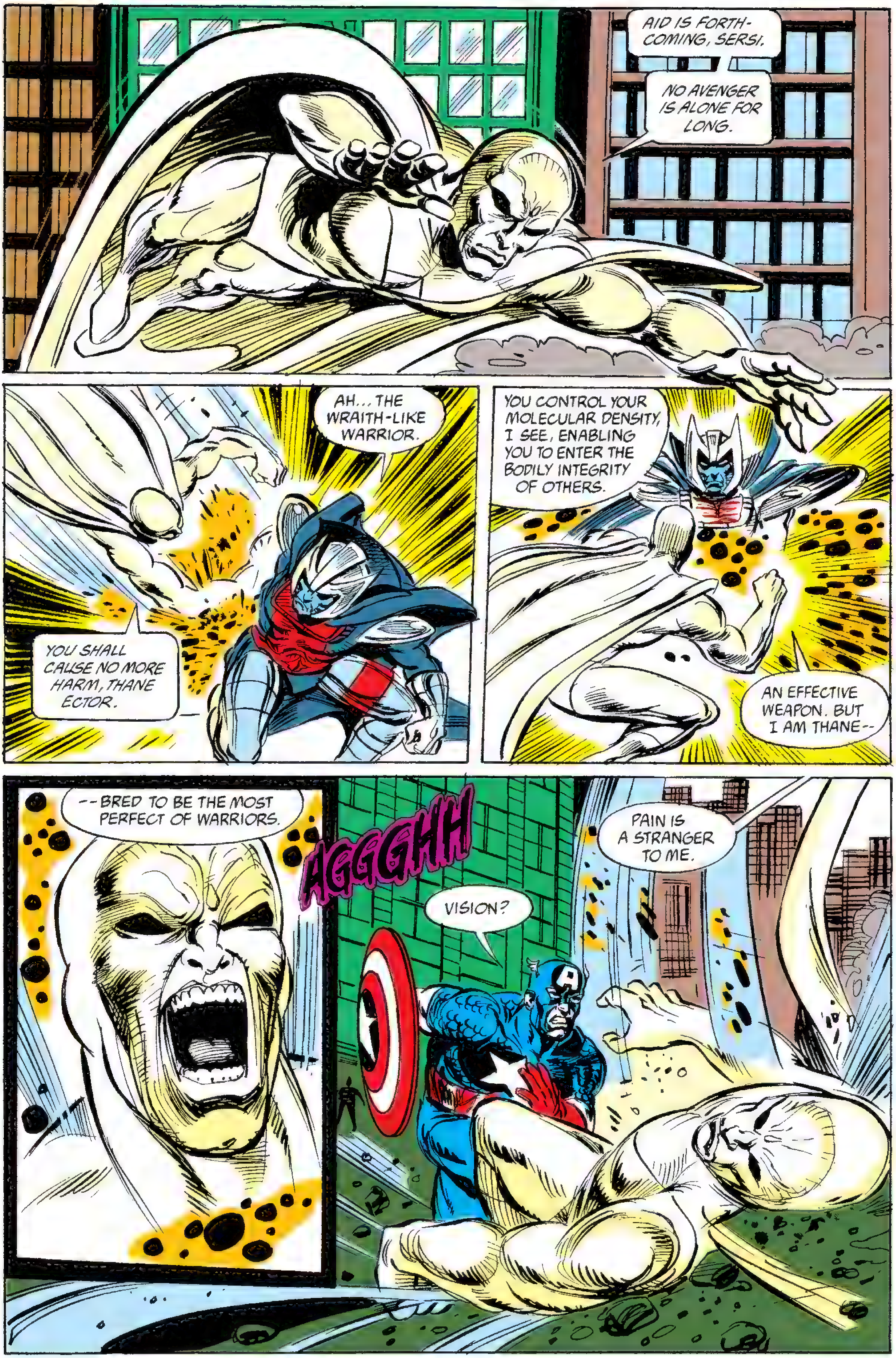

BLOODY ENCOUNTER
PARIS, FRANCE.
THE BRETHREN HAVE APPEARED ONCE MORE.
AGAIN WE ATTACK, AND AGAIN WE MEET THE MOST PALTRY OF RESISTANCE!
GO, MY BRETHREN, GO AND MAKE THIS PLACE FEAR THE NAME THANE ECTOR!
BOB HARRAS: writer
STEVE EPTIG: penciler
PALMER & DeZUÑIGA: inkers
CHRISTIE SHEELE: colorist
JOHN COSTANZA: letterer
RALPH MACCHIO: editor
TOM DeFALCO: editor in chief

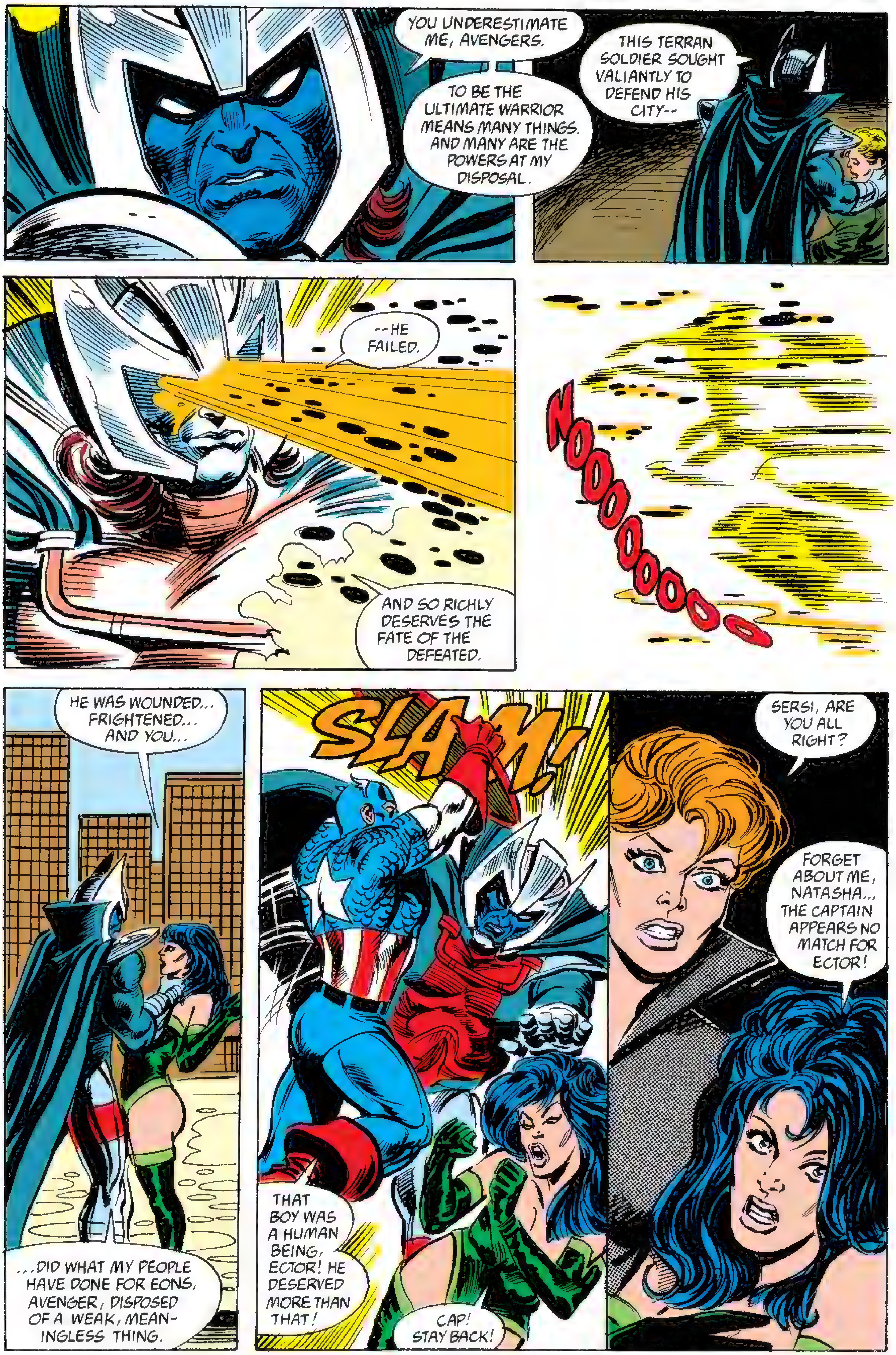

LOOK, MY LADY SYBYL... AND WONDER! THE DEFENDERS OF THIS CITY FALL LIKE WHEAT BEFORE THE SCYTHE. COULD THIS TRULY BE THE WORLD THAT DEFEATED *GALACTUS*?
IT SEEMS THAT THE LEGEND FAR OUTSHINES THE REALITY.
BUT LET NONE DOUBT THE *VALOR* AND *STRENGTH* OF THE BRETHREN...
...FOR DID NOT A THOUSAND WORLDS *FALL* BEFORE OUR MIGHT?
DID NOT A THOUSAND RACES *WEEP* AT OUR COMING?
AND WHEN DOES *THIS* WORLD FALL, MY LORD?
TRUE, WE CONQUERED MANY WORLDS IN THE PAST, BUT WE HAVE BEEN PRISONERS OF THE COLLECTOR FOR MANY DECADES.
PERHAPS WE'VE LOST OUR EDGE IN OUR SHAME, FOR THESE RAIDING PARTIES DO NOT BEGIN TO LEAD TO *CONQUEST*!
SYBYL DORN--YOU *DARE* QUESTION ME?
MY LORD! BE AT PEACE. THE LADY MEANT NO DISRESPECT!
AFTER OUR JOYOUS ESCAPE, WE ALL REALIZE OUR PEOPLE NEED TIME FOR SHEER ABANDON!

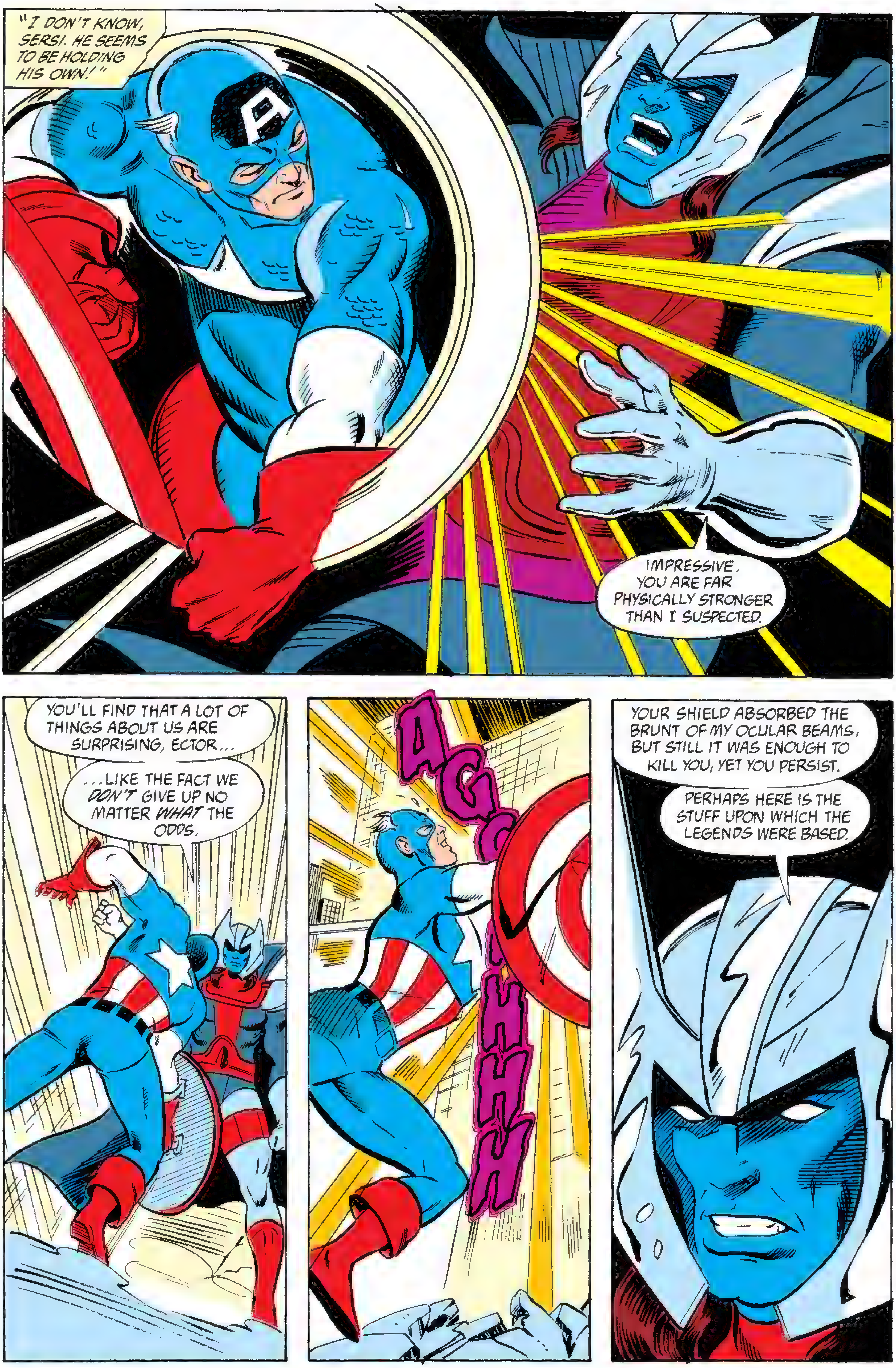

WE KNOW THESE RAIDS ARE BREAKING THE SPIRIT OF THESE TERRANS. INSTILL TERROR AND THE WORLD WILL BE RIPE FOR THE PLUCKING.
LADY DORN IS MERELY... EAGER.
OF COURSE.
MY LADY, YOU'D BEST LISTEN TO THE *FOOL*. HE IS WISER THAN YOU KNOW.
HE IS A THROWBACK-FREAK WHO FORGETS HIS PLACE!
IT IS A MIRACLE HE WAS NOT KILLED AT BIRTH, FOR NO TRUE BRETHREN SHOULD HAVE SUFFERED HIM TO LIVE.
POW
I--! --DID FORGET MY PLACE, MY LADY. I AM A FOOL... IN NAME AND DEED. AS ALWAYS, I BOW BEFORE MY SUPERIOR IN THE BRETHREN.
THE WRATH OF THE LADY SYBYL IS LEGENDARY, MY FOOL... AS IS THAT OF OUR PEOPLE. NOW LET US WIPE THIS CITY CLEAN!
I DON'T THINK SO, ECTOR!
WHAT IS THIS!?


NOT WHEN THE AVENGERS ARE HERE!
SO--IT IS YOU AGAIN.
TAKE YOUR FOOLISH WEAPON BACK--
--ONLY A WEAKLING HIDES BEHIND A SHIELD.
HERK! THESE ALIEN JOKERS ARE ATTACKIN' A GROUP OF KIDS! COME ON!
DOES THE COWARDICE OF THESE BRETHREN KNOW NO BOUNDARIES? THEY CALL THEMSELVES WARRIORS--
--BUT IN OLYMPUS EVEN THE LOWLIEST SATYR HAS MORE HONOR!
THAT'S TELLIN' 'EM, HERKSTER!

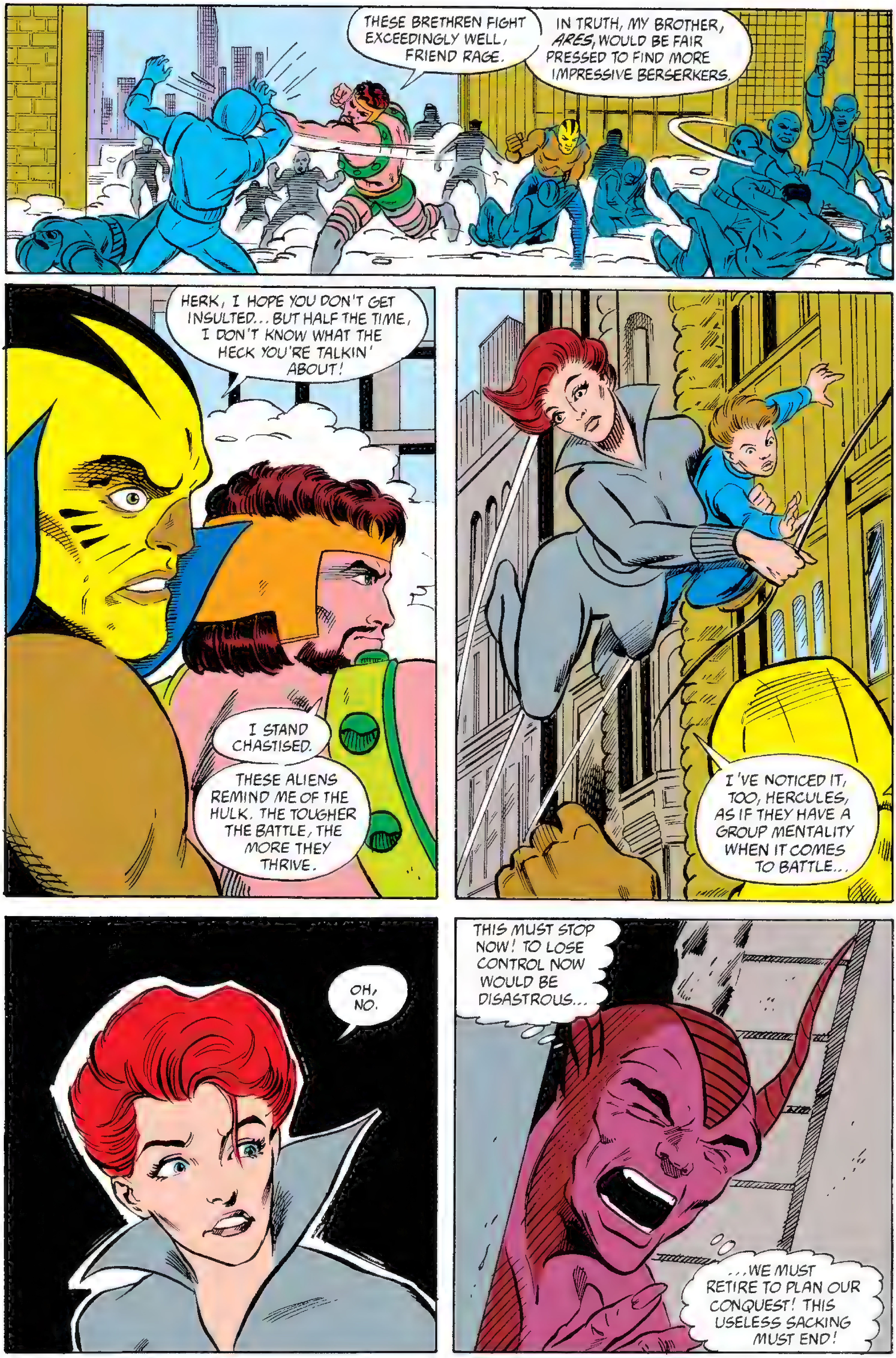

VISION, THIS TACKILY DRESSED LADY SEEMS TO BE ONE OF THE RINGLEADERS. WHAT SAY YOU TO A COMBINED ATTACK?
IT SHOULD PROVE EFFECTIVE, SERSI.
ARGGH
FZZZATT
THE LADY DORN -- FELLED BY--
--A TERRAN OF EXQUISITE BEAUTY.
I DIDN'T TAKE YOU FOR A FLATTERER, ECTOR. YOU'LL TURN MY HEAD.
I THINK YOU'LL FIND WE TERRANS COME IN ALL TYPES OF SHAPES AND SIZES.
YES, I SEE THAT.
BLAM
BUT DO NOT PRESUME UPON THE POWER OF A THANE OF THE BRETHREN.
OOH! YOU'RE A PUGILIST OF SOME NOTE, I SEE.
BOYS, I THINK I COULD USE SOME HELP HERE.

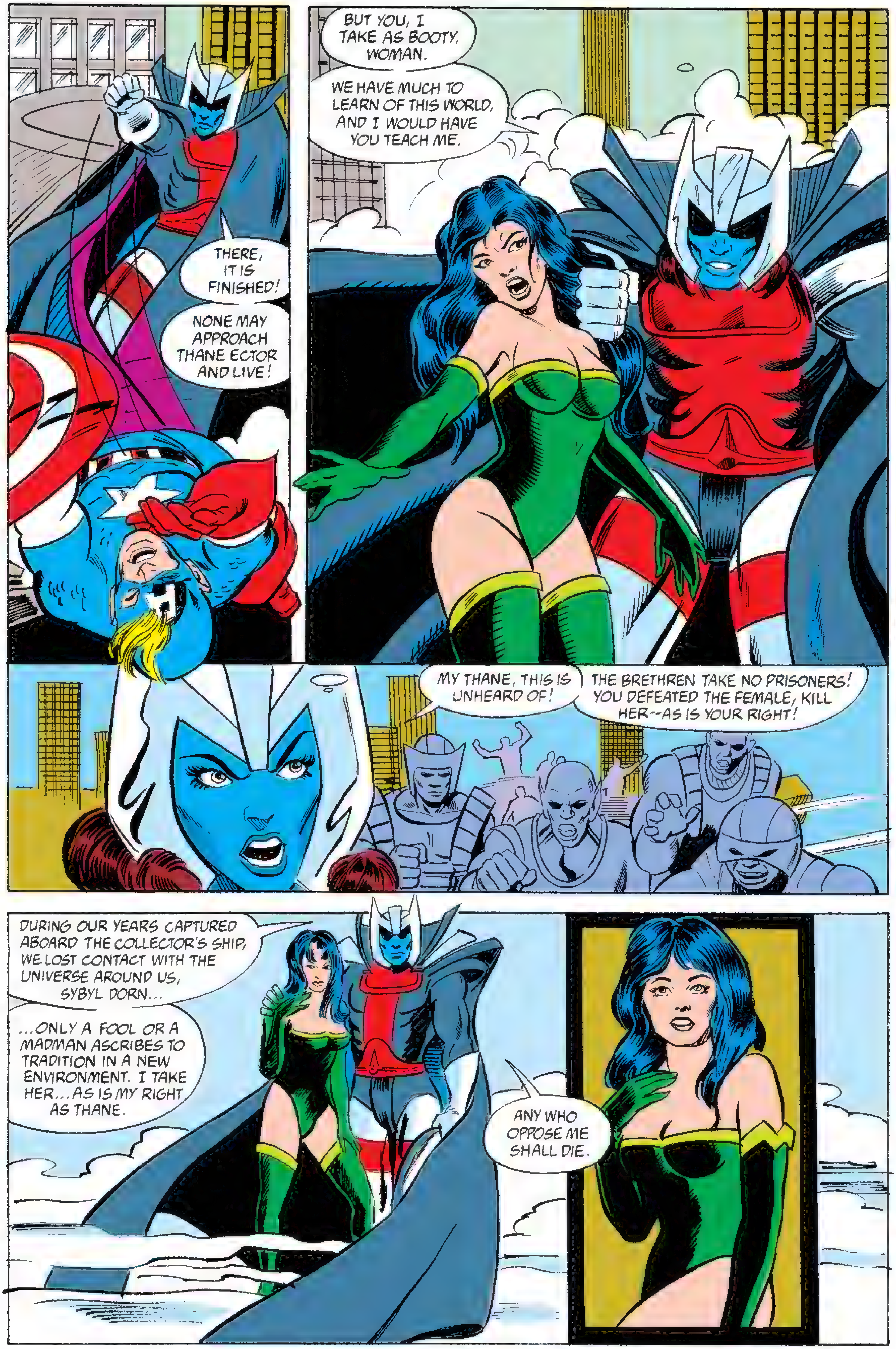

AID IS FORTH-COMING, SERSI.
NO AVENGER IS ALONE FOR LONG.
AH... THE WRAITH-LIKE WARRIOR.
YOU SHALL CAUSE NO MORE HARM, THANE ECTOR.
YOU CONTROL YOUR MOLECULAR DENSITY, I SEE, ENABLING YOU TO ENTER THE BODILY INTEGRITY OF OTHERS.
AN EFFECTIVE WEAPON. BUT I AM THANE--
--BRED TO BE THE MOST PERFECT OF WARRIORS.
AGGGHH
VISION?
PAIN IS A STRANGER TO ME.

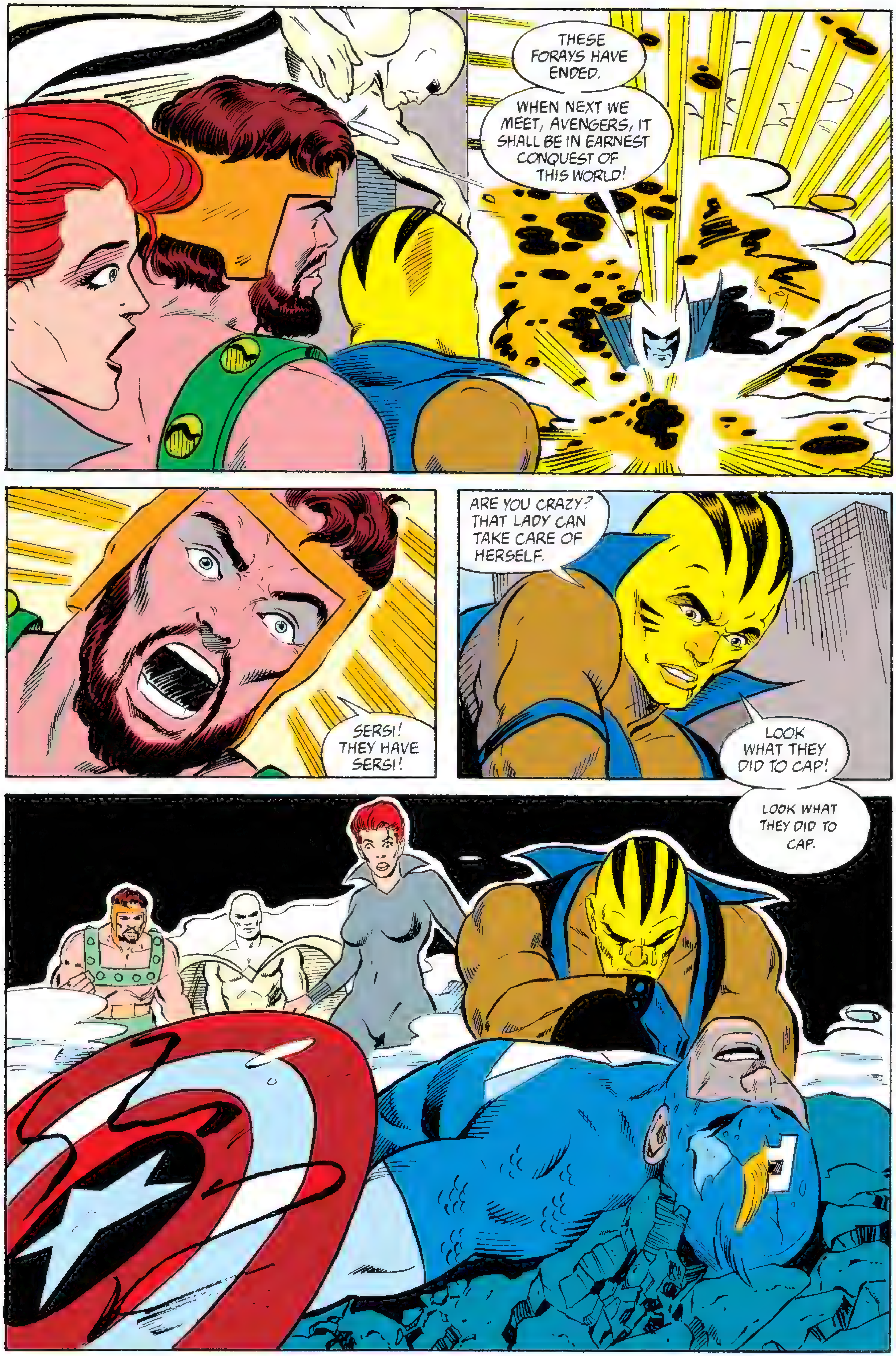

YOU UNDERESTIMATE ME, AVENGERS.
TO BE THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR MEANS MANY THINGS. AND MANY ARE THE POWERS AT MY DISPOSAL.
THIS TERRAN SOLDIER SOUGHT VALIANTLY TO DEFEND HIS CITY--
--HE FAILED.
AND SO RICHLY DESERVES THE FATE OF THE DEFEATED.
NOOOOOOOO
HE WAS WOUNDED... FRIGHTENED... AND YOU...
...DID WHAT MY PEOPLE HAVE DONE FOR EONS, AVENGER, DISPOSED OF A WEAK, MEANINGLESS THING.
SLAM!
THAT BOY WAS A HUMAN BEING, ECTOR! HE DESERVED MORE THAN THAT!
CAP! STAY BACK!
SERSI, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
FORGET ABOUT ME, NATASHA... THE CAPTAIN APPEARS NO MATCH FOR ECTOR!

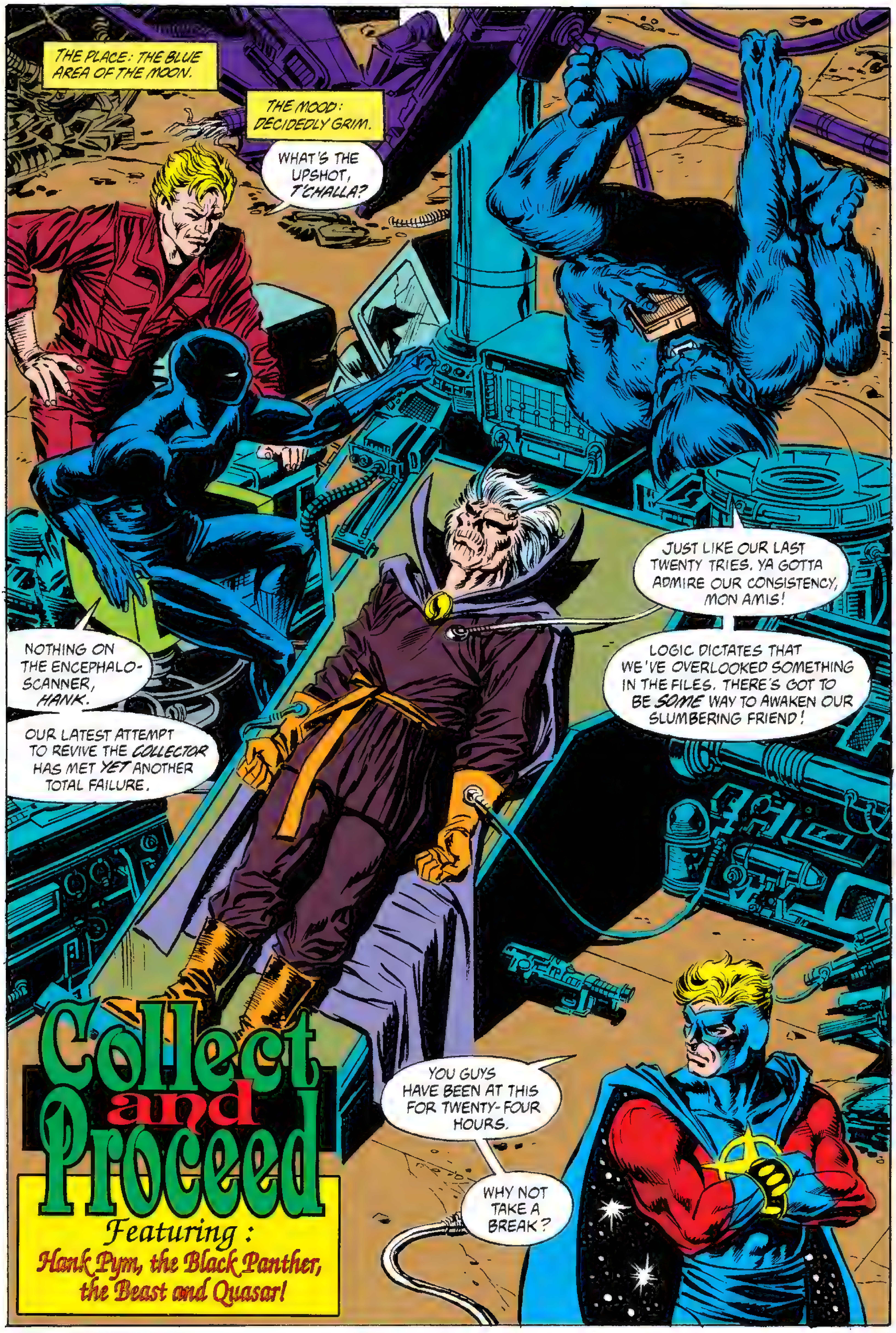

"I DON'T KNOW, SERSI. HE SEEMS TO BE HOLDING HIS OWN!"
IMPRESSIVE. YOU ARE FAR PHYSICALLY STRONGER THAN I SUSPECTED.
YOU'LL FIND THAT A LOT OF THINGS ABOUT US ARE SURPRISING, ECTOR...
...LIKE THE FACT WE *DON'T* GIVE UP NO MATTER *WHAT* THE ODDS.
AGGHHHHH
YOUR SHIELD ABSORBED THE BRUNT OF MY OCULAR BEAMS, BUT STILL IT WAS ENOUGH TO KILL YOU, YET YOU PERSIST.
PERHAPS HERE IS THE STUFF UPON WHICH THE LEGENDS WERE BASED.

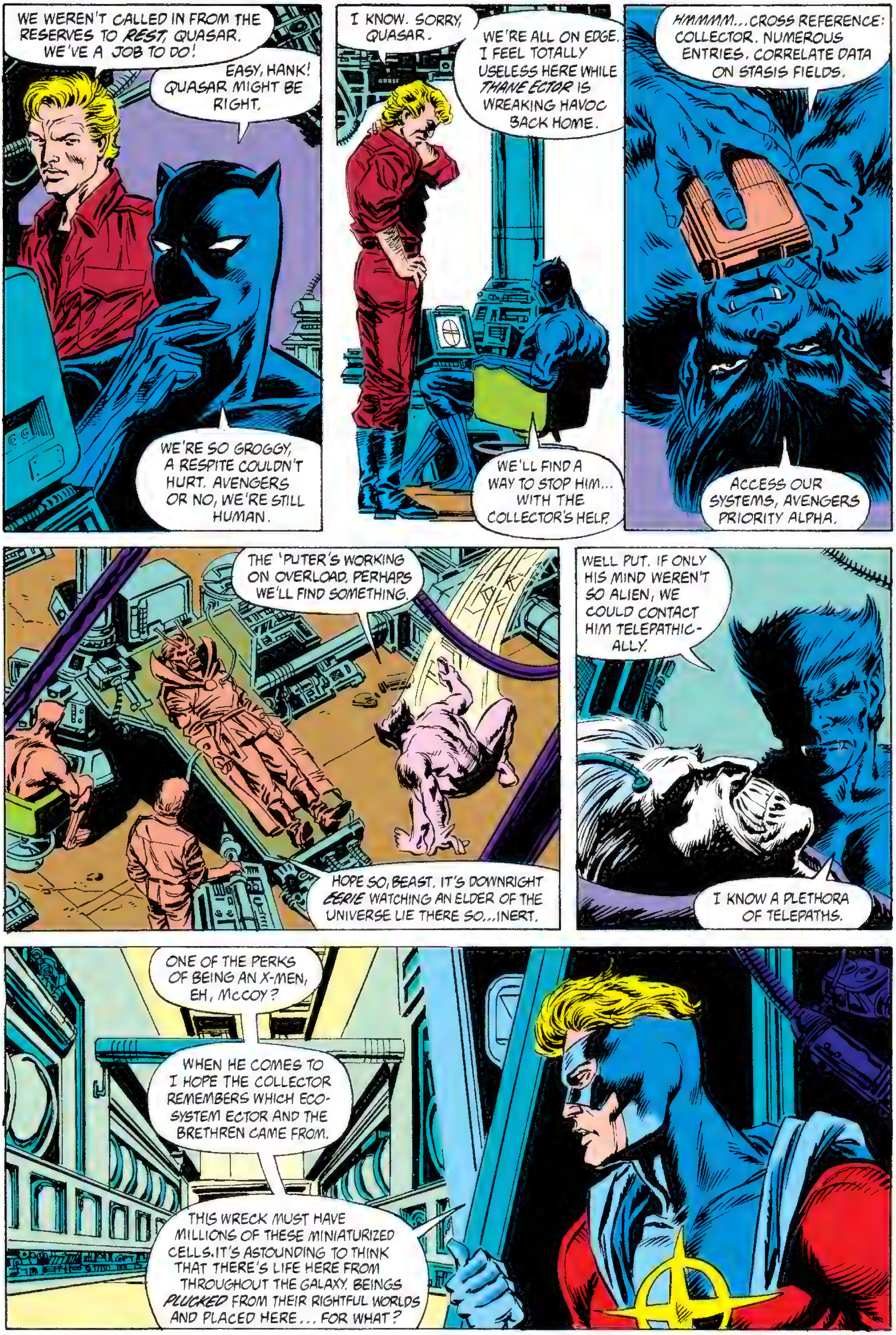
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT LEGENDS, MISTER. ALL I KNOW IS THE FACES OF YOUR VICTIMS... THE SOUNDS OF GRIEF YOU'VE LEFT IN YOUR WAKE.
I'VE DEALT WITH YOUR TYPE BEFORE, ECTOR... PETTY TYRANTS WHO THRIVED ON THE AGONY OF OTHERS.
YOU DON'T IMPRESS ME.
KABAMM
THEN, THE FEELING IS MUTUAL, CAPTAIN AMERICA.
SKRAASH
STILL YOU COME. ARE YOU MAD?
WE ARE THE BRETHREN. NO WORLD HAS SURVIVED OUR COMING, LITTLE MAN...
...KNOW THAT DESPITE ALL YOUR EFFORTS, THIS WORLD, TOO, SHALL FALL!

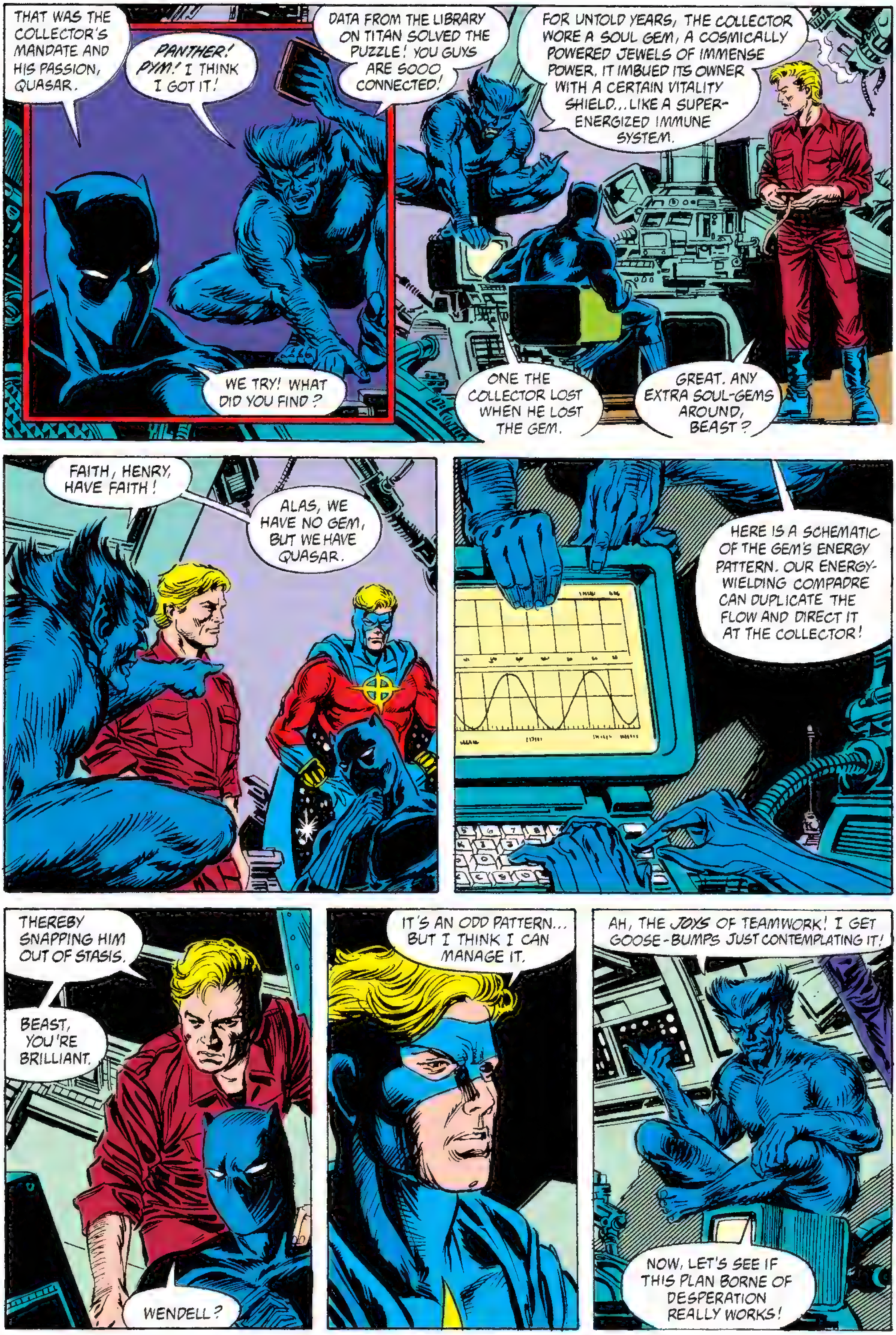

THESE BRETHREN FIGHT EXCEEDINGLY WELL, FRIEND RAGE.
IN TRUTH, MY BROTHER, *ARES*, WOULD BE FAIR PRESSED TO FIND MORE IMPRESSIVE BERSERKERS.
HERK, I HOPE YOU DON'T GET INSULTED... BUT HALF THE TIME, I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HECK YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT!
I STAND CHASTISED.
THESE ALIENS REMIND ME OF THE HULK. THE TOUGHER THE BATTLE, THE MORE THEY THRIVE.
I'VE NOTICED IT, TOO, HERCULES, AS IF THEY HAVE A GROUP MENTALITY WHEN IT COMES TO BATTLE...
OH, NO.
THIS MUST STOP NOW! TO LOSE CONTROL NOW WOULD BE DISASTROUS...
...WE MUST RETIRE TO PLAN OUR CONQUEST! THIS USELESS SACKING MUST END!

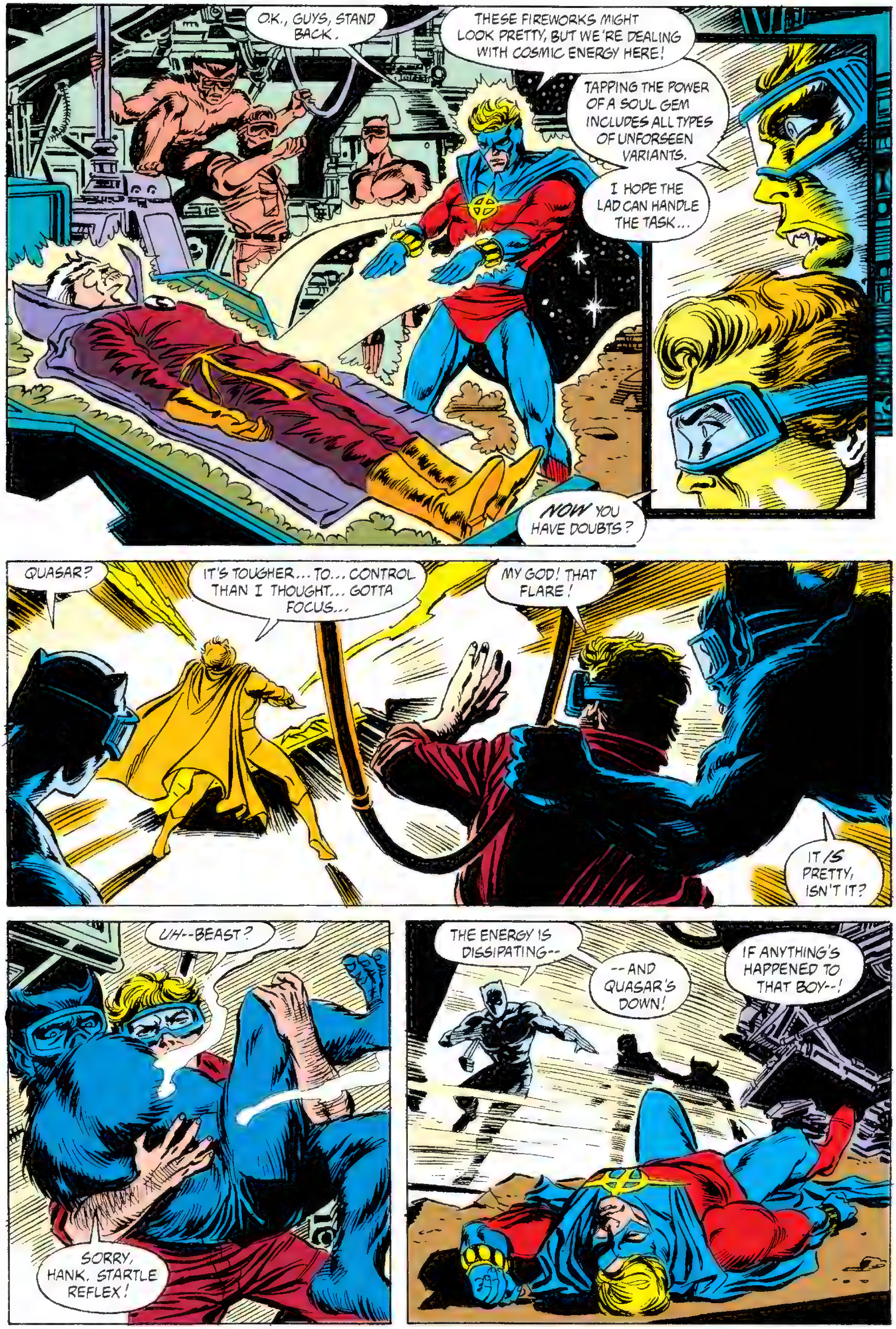

THERE, IT IS FINISHED!
NONE MAY APPROACH THANE ECTOR AND LIVE!
BUT YOU, I TAKE AS BOOTY, WOMAN.
WE HAVE MUCH TO LEARN OF THIS WORLD, AND I WOULD HAVE YOU TEACH ME.
MY THANE, THIS IS UNHEARD OF!
THE BRETHREN TAKE NO PRISONERS! YOU DEFEATED THE FEMALE, KILL HER--AS IS YOUR RIGHT!
DURING OUR YEARS CAPTURED ABOARD THE COLLECTOR'S SHIP, WE LOST CONTACT WITH THE UNIVERSE AROUND US, SYBYL DORN...
...ONLY A FOOL OR A MADMAN ASCRIBES TO TRADITION IN A NEW ENVIRONMENT. I TAKE HER... AS IS MY RIGHT AS THANE.
ANY WHO OPPOSE ME SHALL DIE.

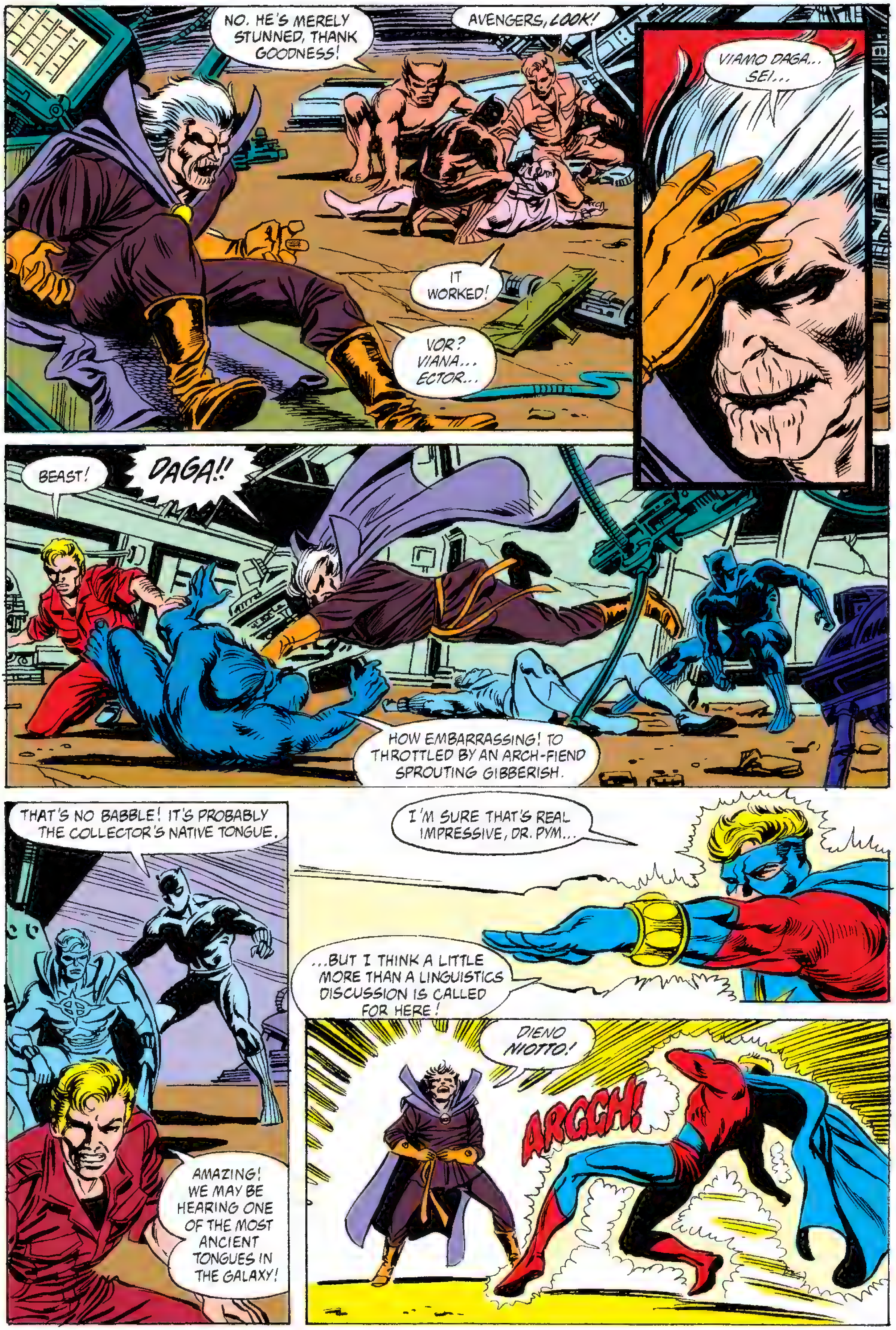

THESE FORAYS HAVE ENDED.
WHEN NEXT WE MEET, AVENGERS, IT SHALL BE IN EARNEST CONQUEST OF THIS WORLD!
SERSI! THEY HAVE SERSI!
ARE YOU CRAZY? THAT LADY CAN TAKE CARE OF HERSELF.
LOOK WHAT THEY DID TO CAP!
LOOK WHAT THEY DID TO CAP.

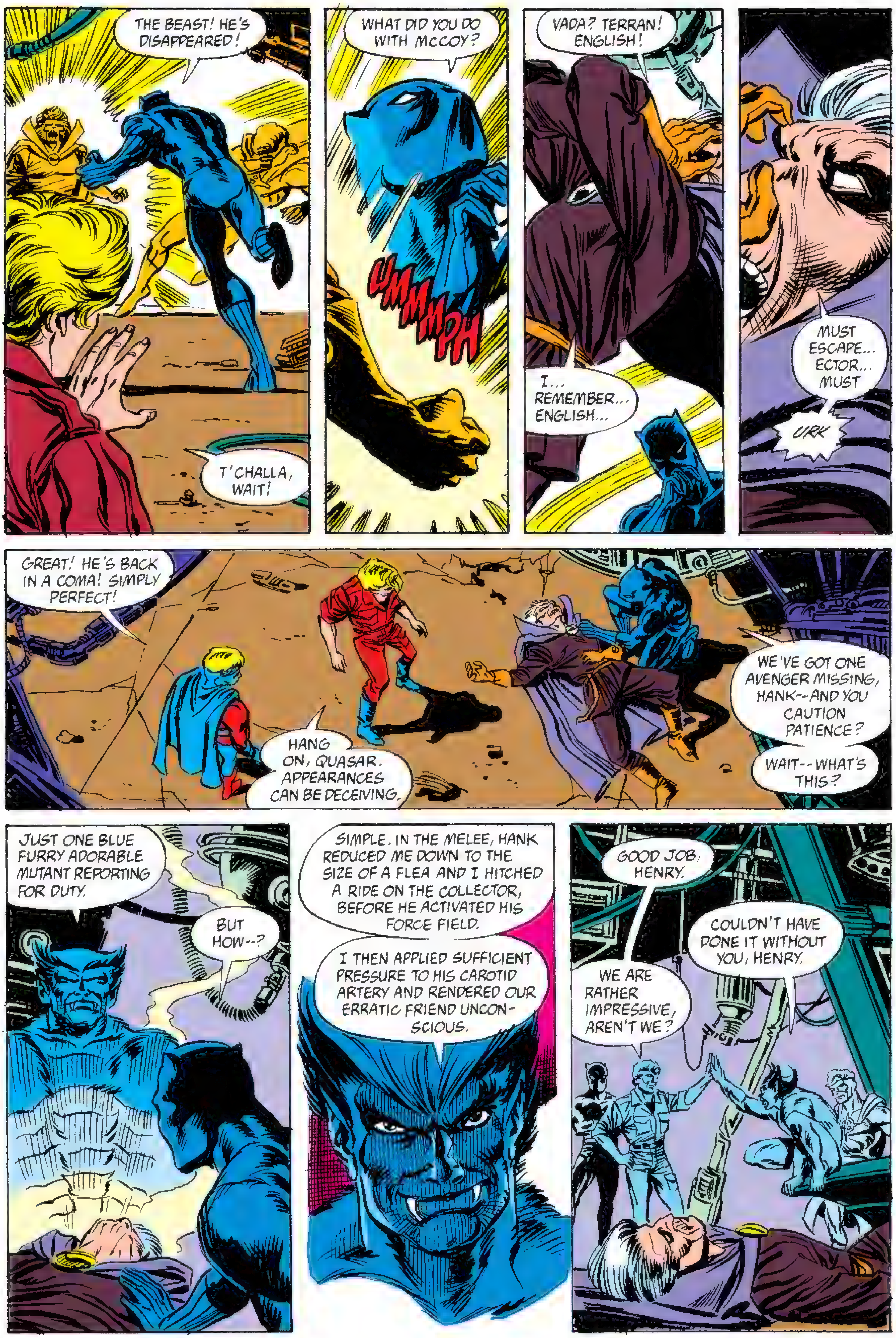

THE PLACE: THE BLUE AREA OF THE MOON.
THE MOOD: DECIDEDLY GRIM.
WHAT'S THE UPSHOT, T'CHALLA?
NOTHING ON THE ENCEPHALO-SCANNER, HANK.
OUR LATEST ATTEMPT TO REVIVE THE COLLECTOR HAS MET YET ANOTHER TOTAL FAILURE.
JUST LIKE OUR LAST TWENTY TRIES. YA GOTTA ADMIRE OUR CONSISTENCY, MON AMIS!
LOGIC DICTATES THAT WE'VE OVERLOOKED SOMETHING IN THE FILES. THERE'S GOT TO BE SOME WAY TO AWAKEN OUR SLUMBERING FRIEND!
YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN AT THIS FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.
WHY NOT TAKE A BREAK?
Collect and Proceed
Featuring: Hank Pym, the Black Panther, the Beast and Quasar!

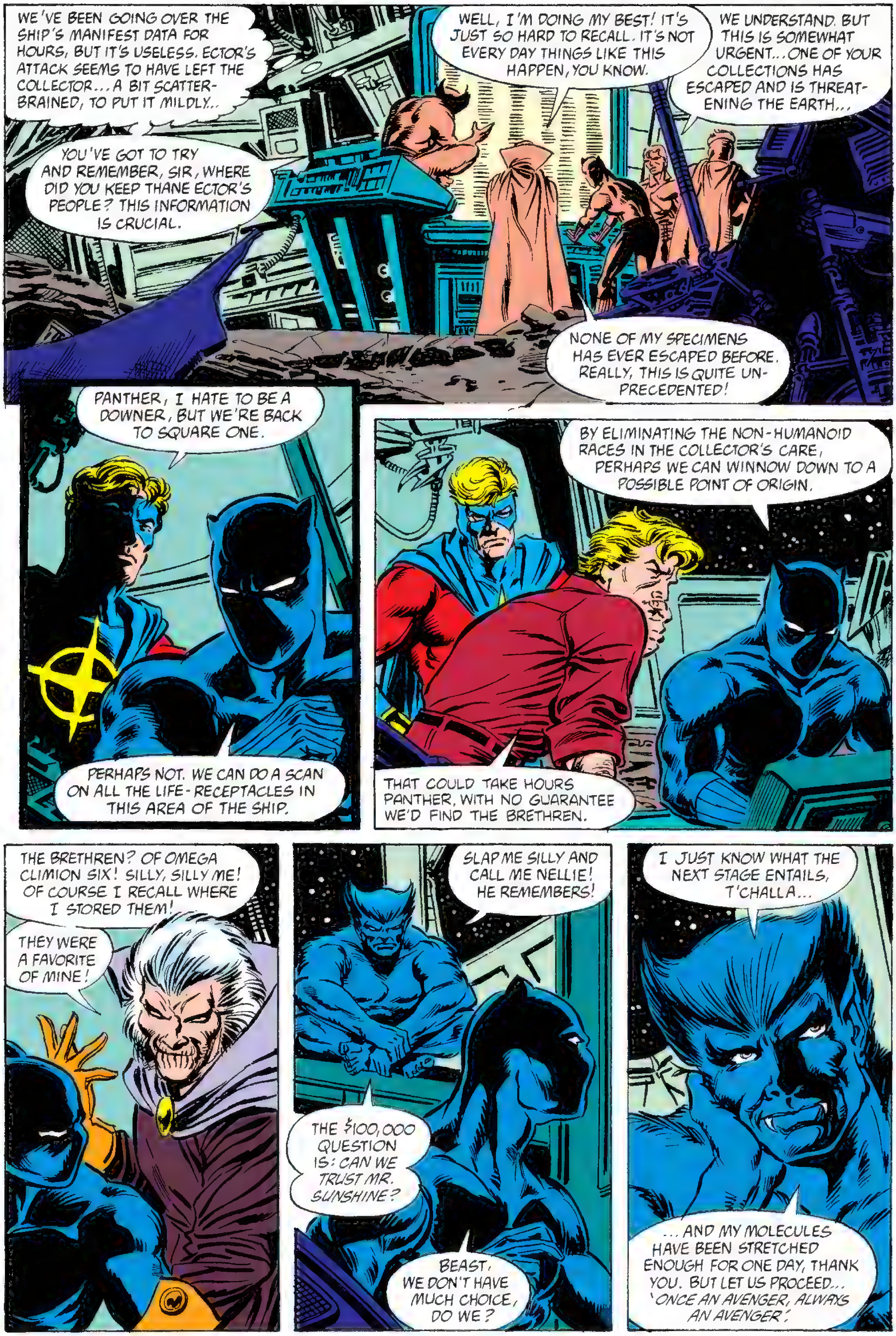

WE WEREN'T CALLED IN FROM THE RESERVES TO *REST*, QUASAR. WE'VE A JOB TO DO!
EASY, HANK! QUASAR MIGHT BE RIGHT.
WE'RE SO GROGGY, A RESPITE COULDN'T HURT. AVENGERS OR NO, WE'RE STILL HUMAN.
I KNOW. SORRY, QUASAR.
WE'RE ALL ON EDGE. I FEEL TOTALLY USELESS HERE WHILE *THANE ECTOR* IS WREAKING HAVOC BACK HOME.
WE'LL FIND A WAY TO STOP HIM... WITH THE COLLECTOR'S HELP.
HMMMM... CROSS REFERENCE: COLLECTOR. NUMEROUS ENTRIES. CORRELATE DATA ON STASIS FIELDS.
ACCESS OUR SYSTEMS, AVENGERS PRIORITY ALPHA.
THE 'PUTER'S WORKING ON OVERLOAD. PERHAPS WE'LL FIND SOMETHING.
HOPE SO, BEAST. IT'S DOWNRIGHT *EERIE* WATCHING AN ELDER OF THE UNIVERSE LIE THERE SO... INERT.
WELL PUT. IF ONLY HIS MIND WEREN'T SO ALIEN, WE COULD CONTACT HIM TELEPATHICALLY.
I KNOW A PLETHORA OF TELEPATHS.
ONE OF THE PERKS OF BEING AN X-MEN, EH, McCOY?
WHEN HE COMES TO I HOPE THE COLLECTOR REMEMBERS WHICH ECO-SYSTEM ECTOR AND THE BRETHREN CAME FROM.
THIS WRECK MUST HAVE MILLIONS OF THESE MINIATURIZED CELLS. IT'S ASTOUNDING TO THINK THAT THERE'S LIFE HERE FROM THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY. BEINGS *PLUCKED* FROM THEIR RIGHTFUL WORLDS AND PLACED HERE... FOR WHAT?

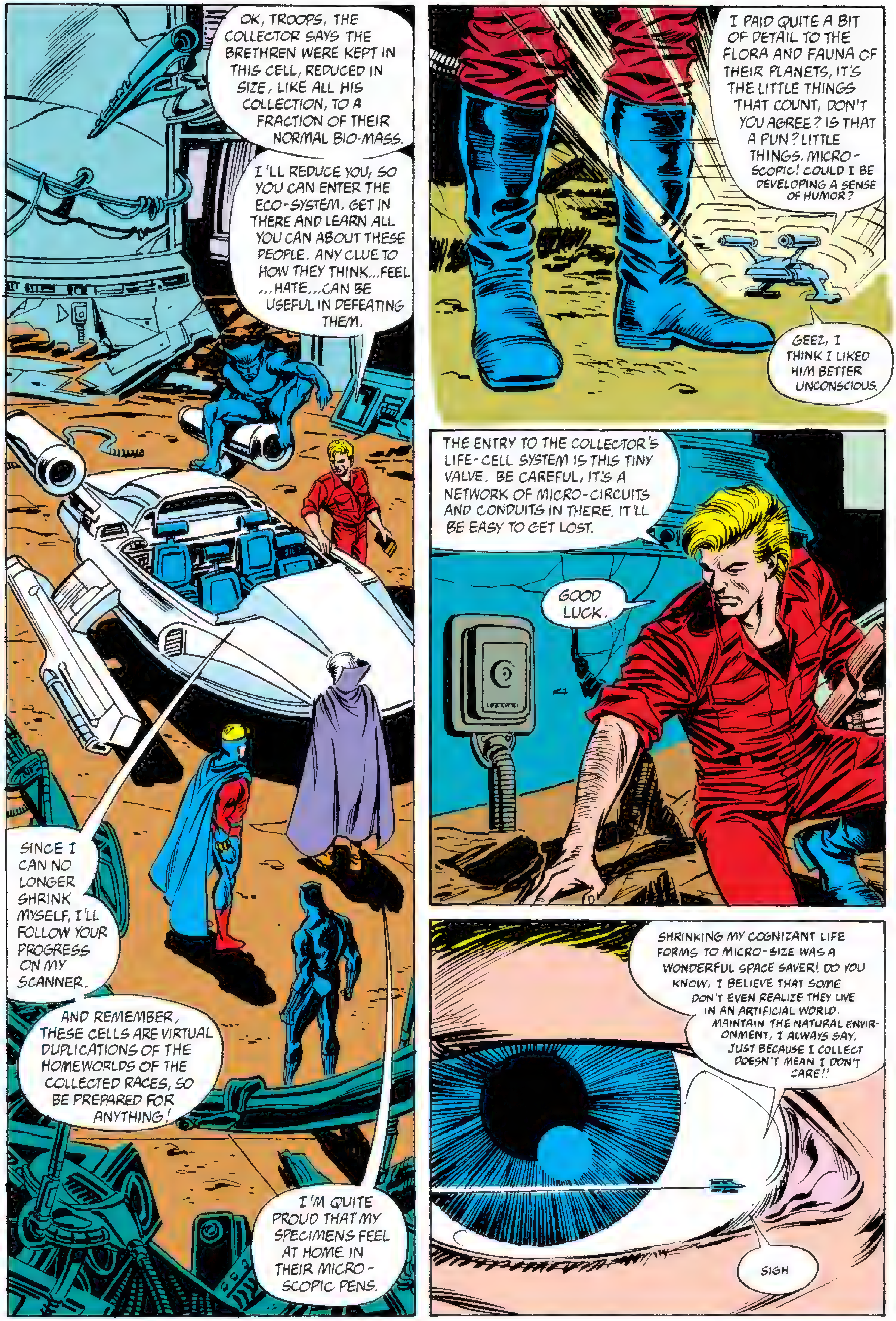

THAT WAS THE COLLECTOR'S MANDATE AND HIS PASSION, QUASAR.
PANTHER! PYM! I THINK I GOT IT!
DATA FROM THE LIBRARY ON TITAN SOLVED THE PUZZLE! YOU GUYS ARE SOOO CONNECTED!
WE TRY! WHAT DID YOU FIND?
FOR UNTOLD YEARS, THE COLLECTOR WORE A SOUL GEM, A COSMICALLY POWERED JEWELS OF IMMENSE POWER. IT IMBUED ITS OWNER WITH A CERTAIN VITALITY SHIELD... LIKE A SUPER-ENERGIZED IMMUNE SYSTEM.
ONE THE COLLECTOR LOST WHEN HE LOST THE GEM.
GREAT. ANY EXTRA SOUL-GEMS AROUND, BEAST?
FAITH, HENRY, HAVE FAITH!
ALAS, WE HAVE NO GEM, BUT WE HAVE QUASAR.
HERE IS A SCHEMATIC OF THE GEM'S ENERGY PATTERN. OUR ENERGY-WIELDING COMPADRE CAN DUPLICATE THE FLOW AND DIRECT IT AT THE COLLECTOR!
THEREBY SNAPPING HIM OUT OF STASIS.
BEAST, YOU'RE BRILLIANT.
WENDELL?
IT'S AN ODD PATTERN... BUT I THINK I CAN MANAGE IT.
AH, THE *JOYS* OF TEAMWORK! I GET GOOSE-BUMPS JUST CONTEMPLATING IT!
NOW, LET'S SEE IF THIS PLAN BORNE OF DESPERATION REALLY WORKS!

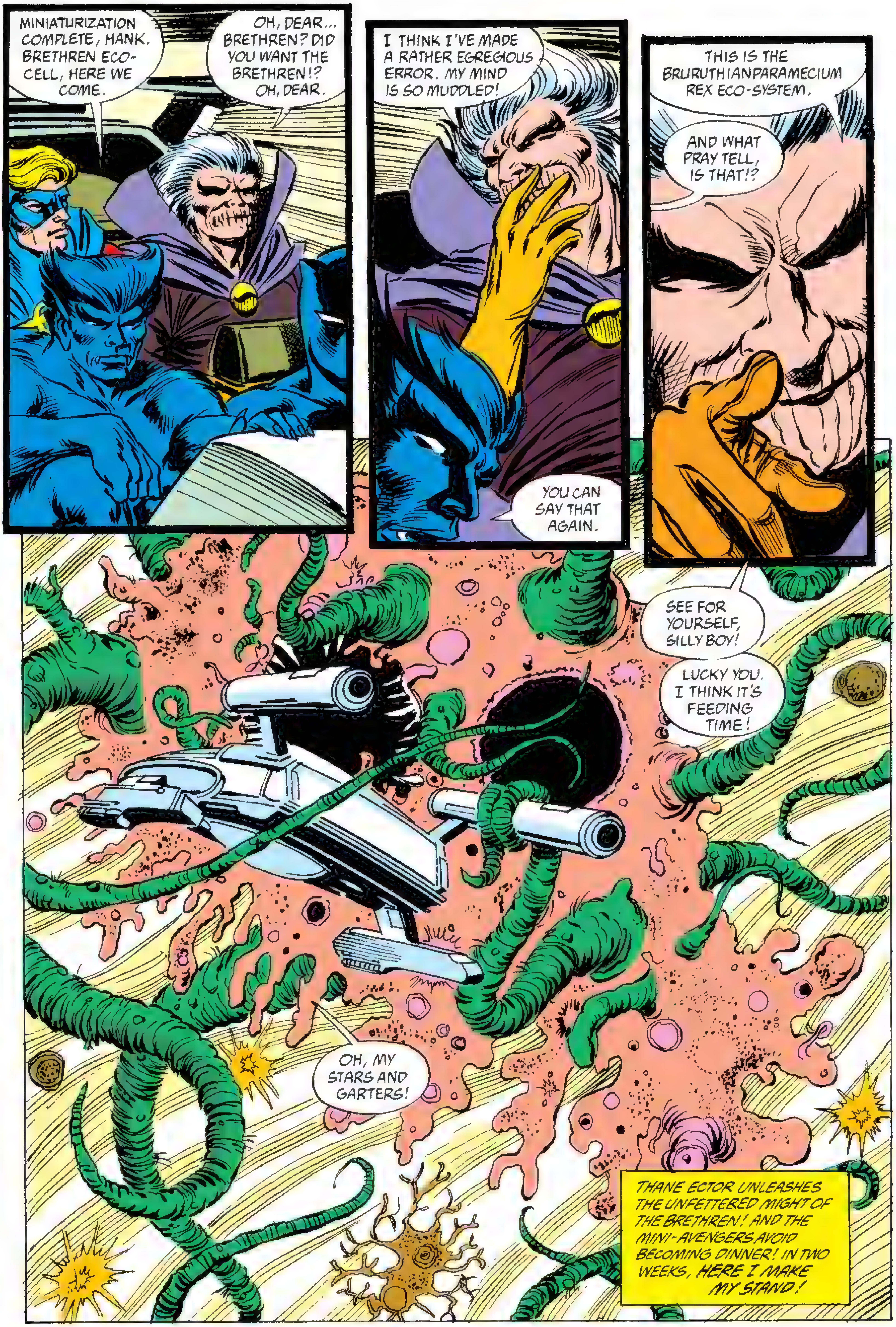

O.K., GUYS, STAND BACK.
THESE FIREWORKS MIGHT LOOK PRETTY, BUT WE'RE DEALING WITH COSMIC ENERGY HERE!
TAPPING THE POWER OF A SOUL GEM INCLUDES ALL TYPES OF UNFORSEEN VARIANTS.
I HOPE THE LAD CAN HANDLE THE TASK...
NOW YOU HAVE DOUBTS?
QUASAR?
IT'S TOUGHER... TO... CONTROL THAN I THOUGHT... GOTTA FOCUS...
MY GOD! THAT FLARE!
IT *IS* PRETTY, ISN'T IT?
UH--BEAST?
SORRY, HANK. STARTLE REFLEX!
THE ENERGY IS DISSIPATING--
--AND QUASAR'S DOWN!
IF ANYTHING'S HAPPENED TO THAT BOY--!


NO. HE'S MERELY STUNNED, THANK GOODNESS!
AVENGERS, LOOK!
IT WORKED!
VOR? VIANA... ECTOR...
VIAMO DAGA... SEI...
BEAST!
DAGA!!
HOW EMBARRASSING! TO THROTTLED BY AN ARCH-FIEND SPROUTING GIBBERISH.
THAT'S NO BABBLE! IT'S PROBABLY THE COLLECTOR'S NATIVE TONGUE.
AMAZING! WE MAY BE HEARING ONE OF THE MOST ANCIENT TONGUES IN THE GALAXY!
I'M SURE THAT'S REAL IMPRESSIVE, DR. PYM...
...BUT I THINK A LITTLE MORE THAN A LINGUISTICS DISCUSSION IS CALLED FOR HERE!
DIENO NIOTTO!
ARGGH!


THE BEAST! HE'S DISAPPEARED!
T'CHALLA, WAIT!
WHAT DID YOU DO WITH McCOY?
UMMMPH
VADA? TERRAN! ENGLISH!
I... REMEMBER... ENGLISH...
MUST ESCAPE... ECTOR... MUST
URK
GREAT! HE'S BACK IN A COMA! SIMPLY PERFECT!
HANG ON, QUASAR. APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEIVING.
WE'VE GOT ONE AVENGER MISSING, HANK--AND YOU CAUTION PATIENCE?
WAIT--WHAT'S THIS?
JUST ONE BLUE FURRY ADORABLE MUTANT REPORTING FOR DUTY.
BUT HOW--?
SIMPLE. IN THE MELEE, HANK REDUCED ME DOWN TO THE SIZE OF A FLEA AND I HITCHED A RIDE ON THE COLLECTOR, BEFORE HE ACTIVATED HIS FORCE FIELD.
I THEN APPLIED SUFFICIENT PRESSURE TO HIS CAROTID ARTERY AND RENDERED OUR ERRATIC FRIEND UNCONSCIOUS.
GOOD JOB, HENRY.
COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU, HENRY.
WE ARE RATHER IMPRESSIVE, AREN'T WE?

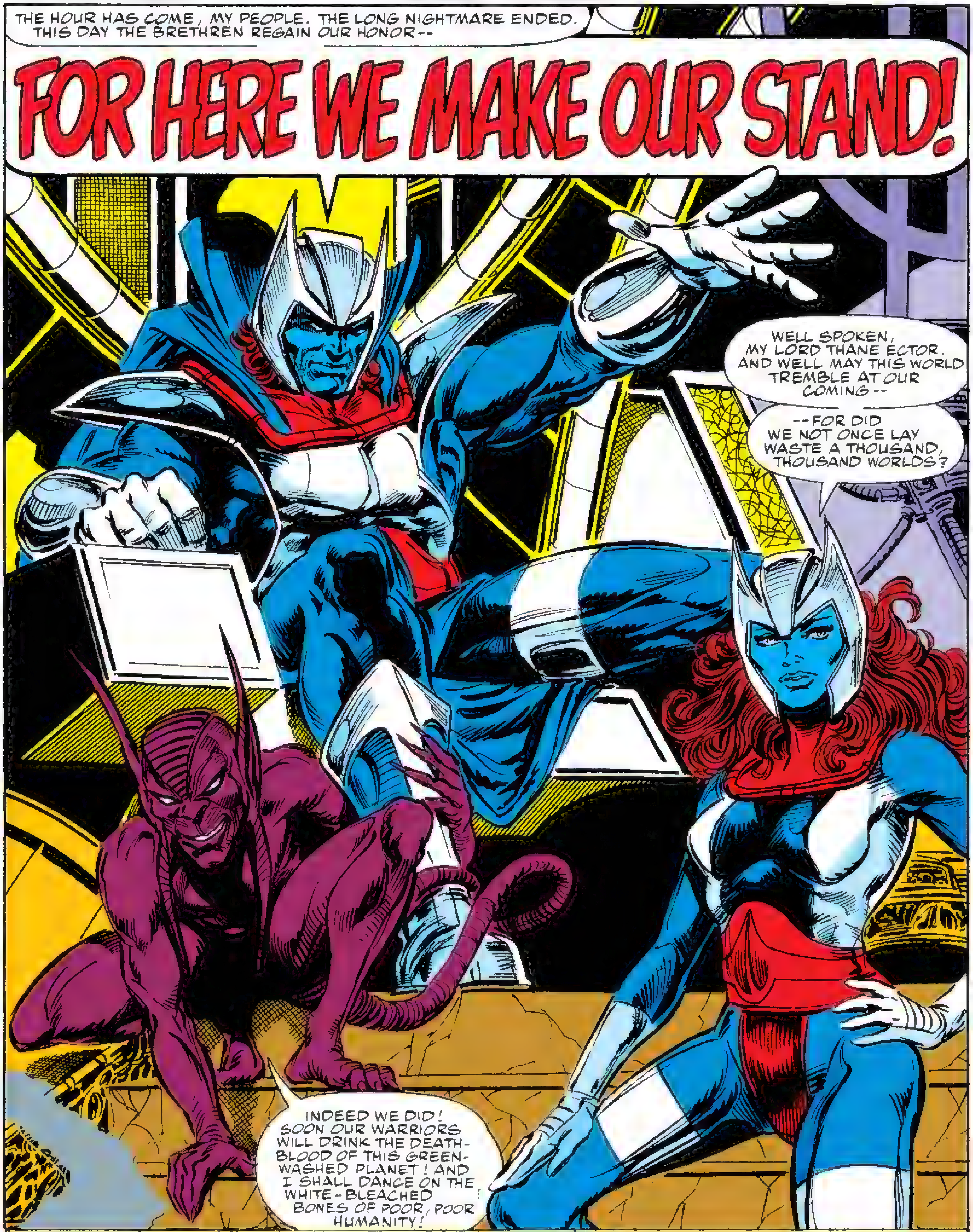

WE'VE BEEN GOING OVER THE SHIP'S MANIFEST DATA FOR HOURS, BUT IT'S USELESS. ECTOR'S ATTACK SEEMS TO HAVE LEFT THE COLLECTOR... A BIT SCATTER-BRAINED, TO PUT IT MILDLY...
YOU'VE GOT TO TRY AND REMEMBER, SIR, WHERE DID YOU KEEP THANE ECTOR'S PEOPLE? THIS INFORMATION IS CRUCIAL.
WELL, I'M DOING MY BEST! IT'S JUST SO HARD TO RECALL. IT'S NOT EVERY DAY THINGS LIKE THIS HAPPEN, YOU KNOW.
WE UNDERSTAND, BUT THIS IS SOMEWHAT URGENT... ONE OF YOUR COLLECTIONS HAS ESCAPED AND IS THREATENING THE EARTH...
NONE OF MY SPECIMENS HAS EVER ESCAPED BEFORE. REALLY, THIS IS QUITE UNPRECEDENTED!
PANTHER, I HATE TO BE A DOWNER, BUT WE'RE BACK TO SQUARE ONE.
PERHAPS NOT. WE CAN DO A SCAN ON ALL THE LIFE-RECEPTACLES IN THIS AREA OF THE SHIP.
BY ELIMINATING THE NON-HUMANOID RACES IN THE COLLECTOR'S CARE, PERHAPS WE CAN WINNOW DOWN TO A POSSIBLE POINT OF ORIGIN.
THAT COULD TAKE HOURS PANTHER, WITH NO GUARANTEE WE'D FIND THE BRETHREN.
THE BRETHREN? OF OMEGA CLIMION SIX! SILLY, SILLY ME! OF COURSE I RECALL WHERE I STORED THEM!
THEY WERE A FAVORITE OF MINE!
SLAP ME SILLY AND CALL ME NELLIE! HE REMEMBERS!
THE $100,000 QUESTION IS: CAN WE TRUST MR. SUNSHINE?
BEAST, WE DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE, DO WE?
I JUST KNOW WHAT THE NEXT STAGE ENTAILS, T'CHALLA...
...AND MY MOLECULES HAVE BEEN STRETCHED ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY, THANK YOU. BUT LET US PROCEED... 'ONCE AN AVENGER, ALWAYS AN AVENGER'.


OK, TROOPS, THE COLLECTOR SAYS THE BRETHREN WERE KEPT IN THIS CELL, REDUCED IN SIZE, LIKE ALL HIS COLLECTION, TO A FRACTION OF THEIR NORMAL BIO-MASS.
I'LL REDUCE YOU, SO YOU CAN ENTER THE ECO-SYSTEM. GET IN THERE AND LEARN ALL YOU CAN ABOUT THESE PEOPLE. ANY CLUE TO HOW THEY THINK...FEEL ...HATE...CAN BE USEFUL IN DEFEATING THEM.
SINCE I CAN NO LONGER SHRINK MYSELF, I'LL FOLLOW YOUR PROGRESS ON MY SCANNER.
AND REMEMBER, THESE CELLS ARE VIRTUAL DUPLICATIONS OF THE HOMEWORLDS OF THE COLLECTED RACES, SO BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING!
I'M QUITE PROUD THAT MY SPECIMENS FEEL AT HOME IN THEIR MICRO-SCOPIC PENS.
I PAID QUITE A BIT OF DETAIL TO THE FLORA AND FAUNA OF THEIR PLANETS, IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT, DON'T YOU AGREE? IS THAT A PUN? LITTLE THINGS. MICRO-SCOPIC! COULD I BE DEVELOPING A SENSE OF HUMOR?
GEEZ, I THINK I LIKED HIM BETTER UNCONSCIOUS.
THE ENTRY TO THE COLLECTOR'S LIFE-CELL SYSTEM IS THIS TINY VALVE. BE CAREFUL, IT'S A NETWORK OF MICRO-CIRCUITS AND CONDUITS IN THERE. IT'LL BE EASY TO GET LOST.
GOOD LUCK.
SHRINKING MY COGNIZANT LIFE FORMS TO MICRO-SIZE WAS A WONDERFUL SPACE SAVER! DO YOU KNOW, I BELIEVE THAT SOME DON'T EVEN REALIZE THEY LIVE IN AN ARTIFICIAL WORLD. MAINTAIN THE NATURAL ENVIR-ONMENT, I ALWAYS SAY. JUST BECAUSE I COLLECT DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T CARE!!
SIGH

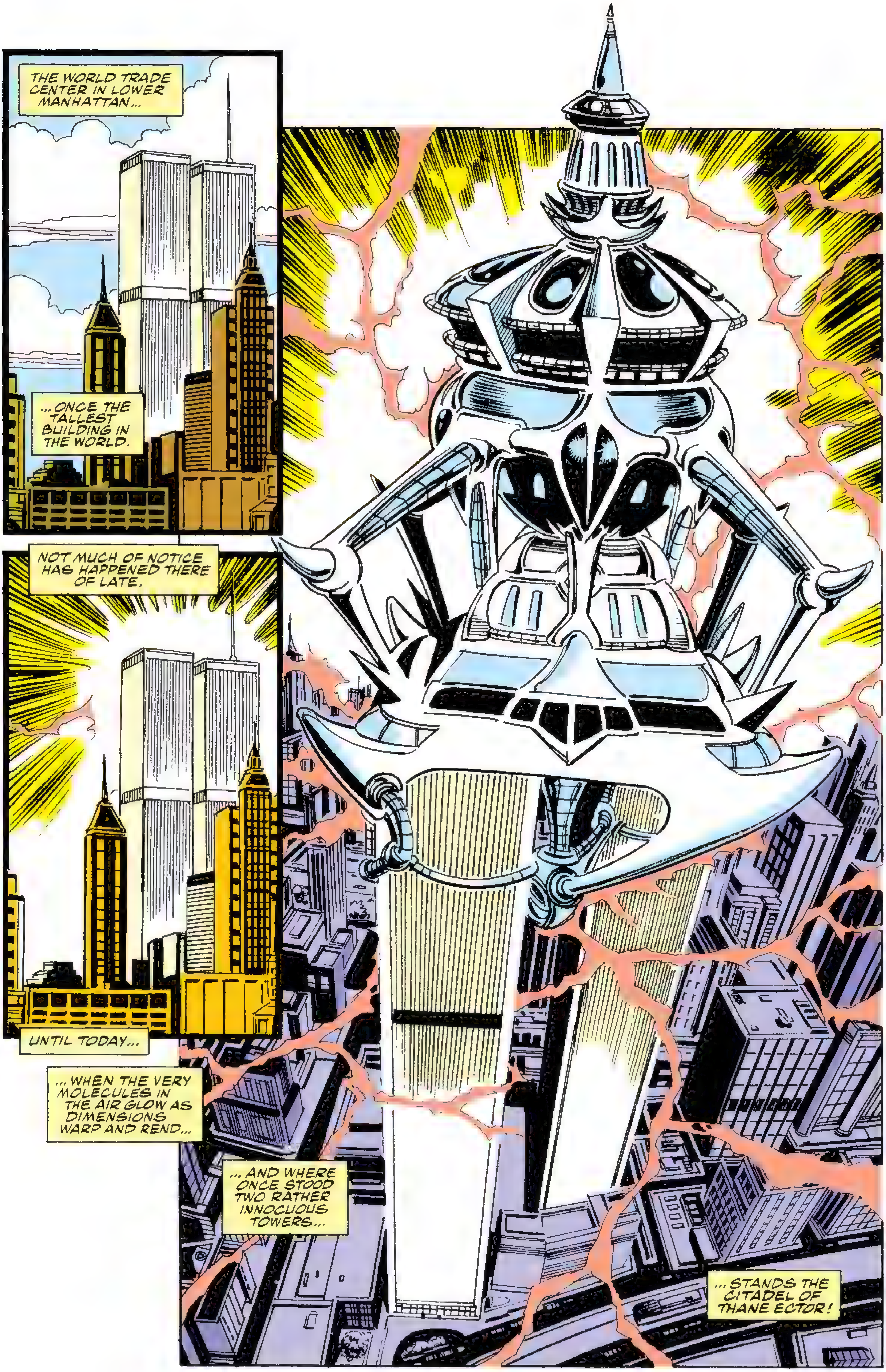

MINIATURIZATION COMPLETE, HANK. BRETHREN ECO-CELL, HERE WE COME.
OH, DEAR... BRETHREN? DID YOU WANT THE BRETHREN!? OH, DEAR.
I THINK I'VE MADE A RATHER EGREGIOUS ERROR. MY MIND IS SO MUDDLED!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN.
THIS IS THE BRURUTHIANPARAMECIUM REX ECO-SYSTEM.
AND WHAT PRAY TELL, IS THAT!?
SEE FOR YOURSELF, SILLY BOY!
LUCKY YOU, I THINK IT'S FEEDING TIME!
OH, MY STARS AND GARTERS!
THANE ECTOR UNLEASHES THE UNFETTERED MIGHT OF THE BRETHREN! AND THE MINI-AVENGERS AVOID BECOMING DINNER! IN TWO WEEKS, HERE I MAKE MY STAND!

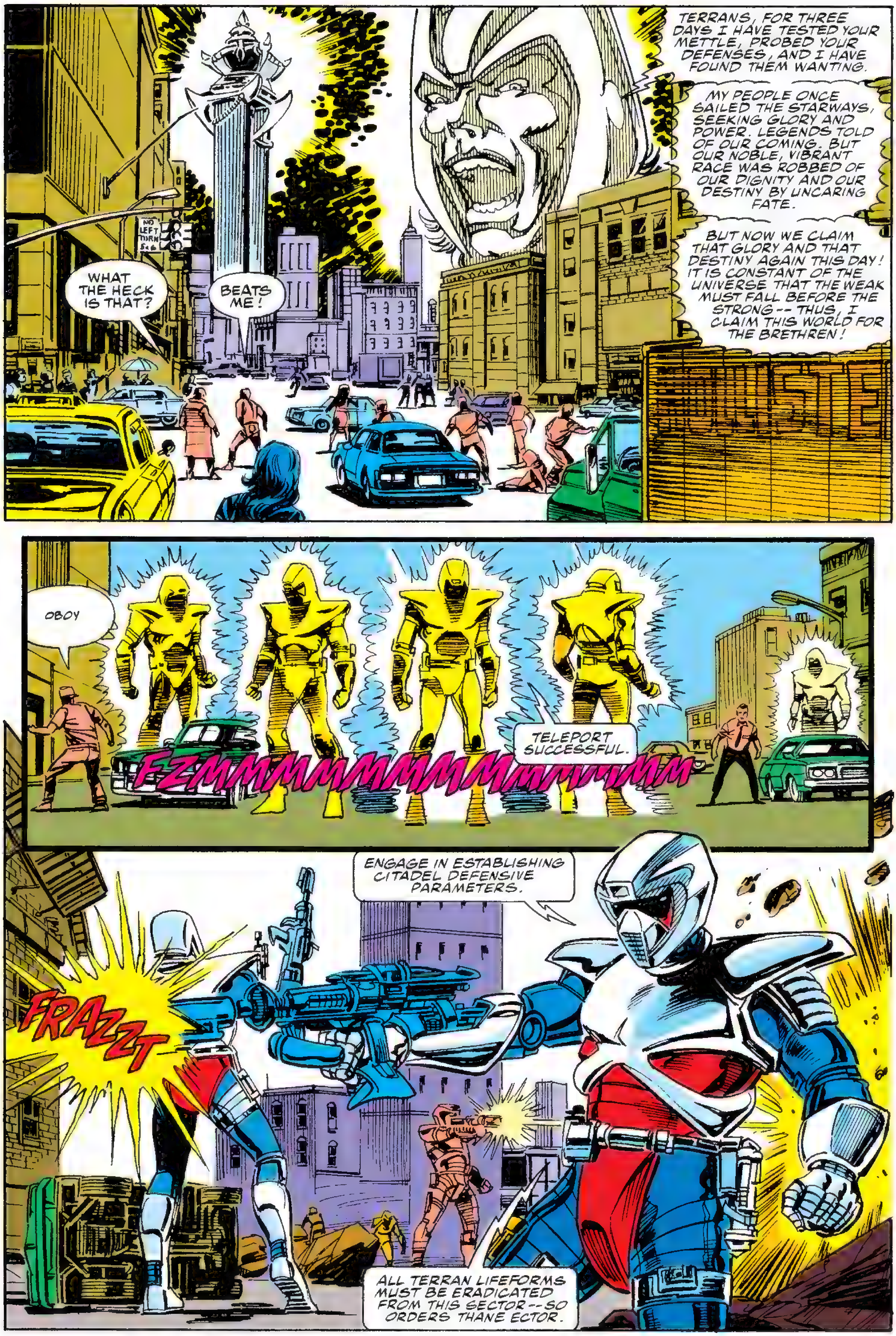
MARVEL COMICS
THE COLLECTION OBSESSION PART 3
AVENGERS®
DOUBLE DISASTER!
© 1991 MARVEL ENT GROUP, INC
TM
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN
336
LATE AUG
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
Ron Lim '91

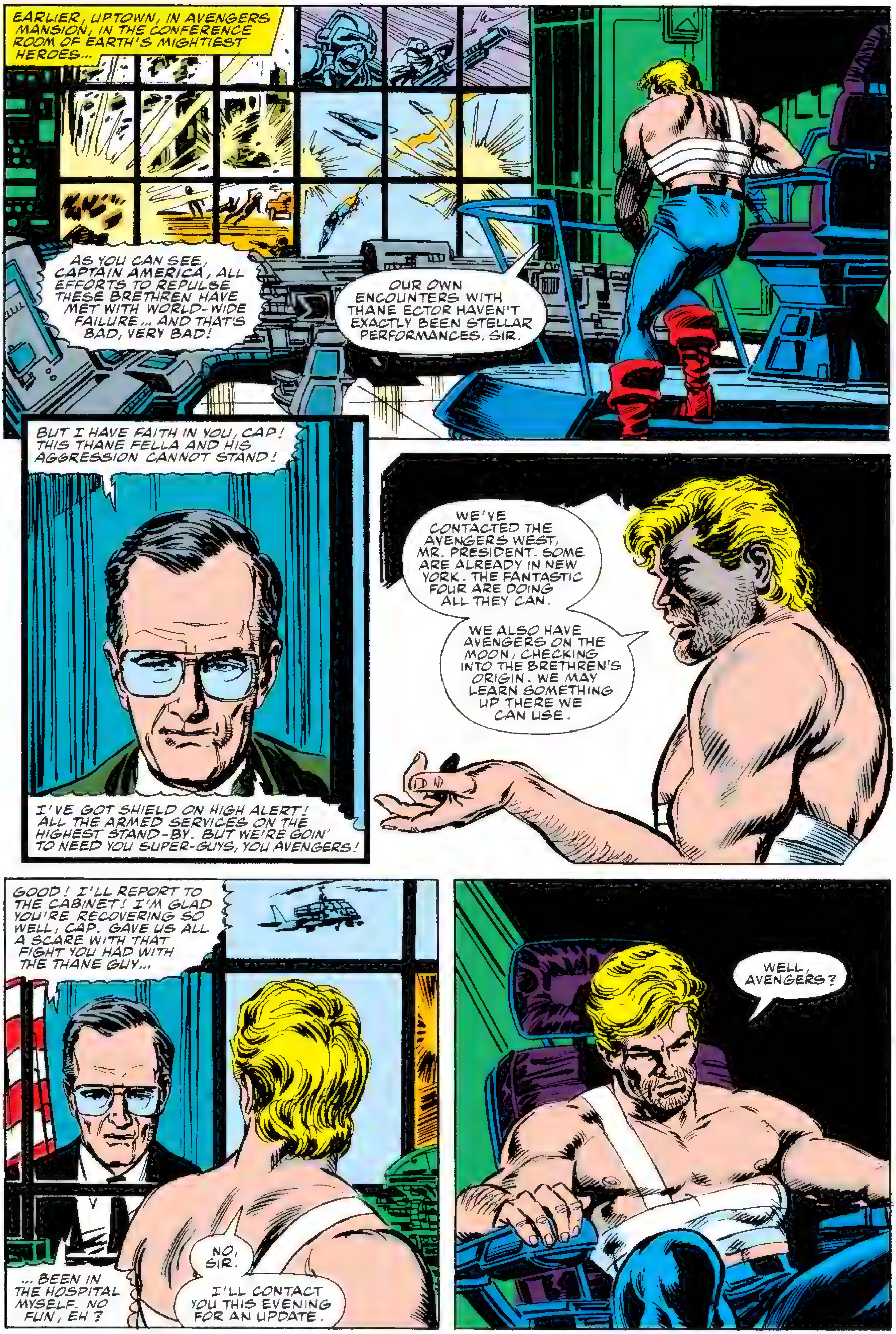
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

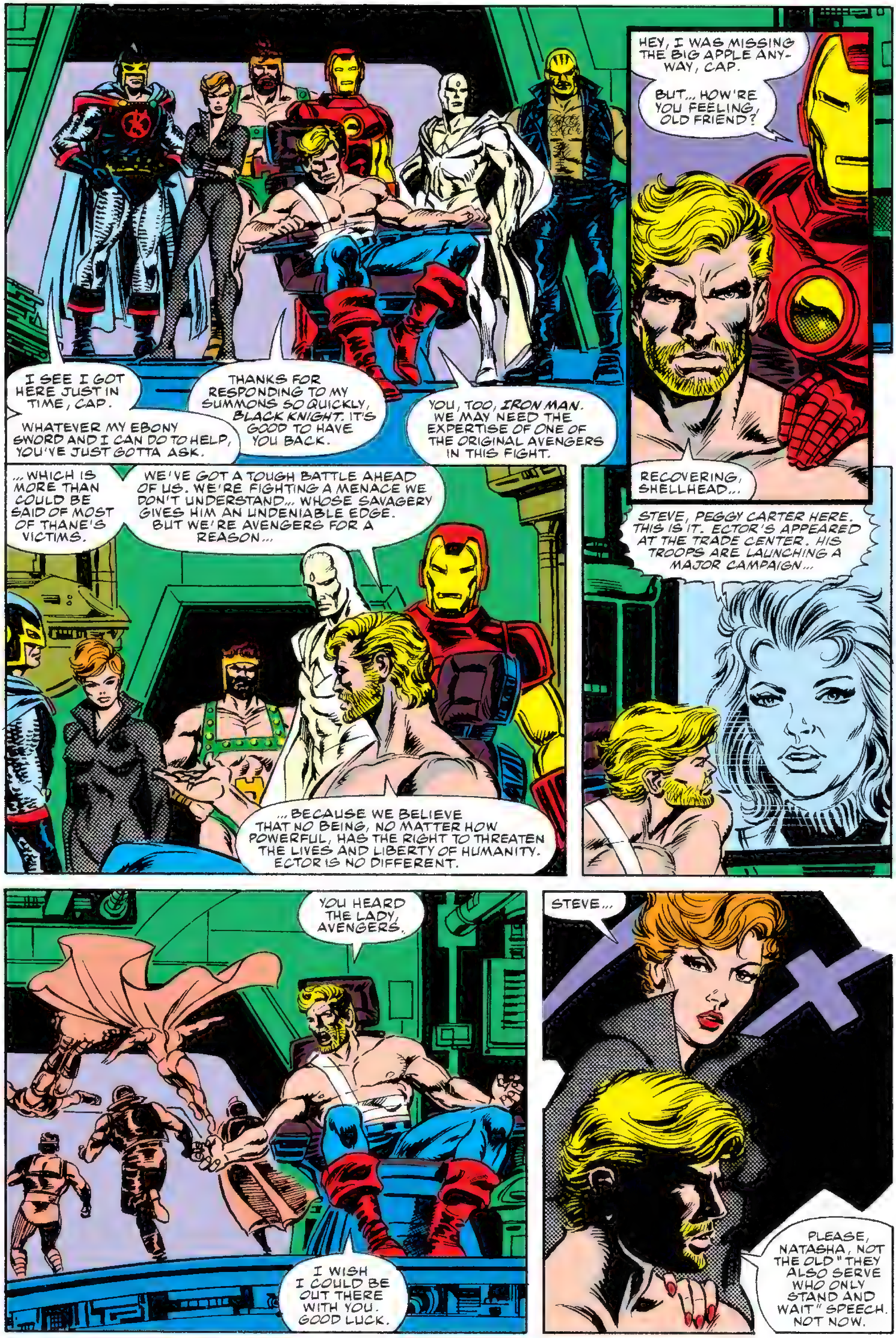

THE HOUR HAS COME, MY PEOPLE. THE LONG NIGHTMARE ENDED. THIS DAY THE BRETHREN REGAIN OUR HONOR--
FOR HERE WE MAKE OUR STAND!
WELL SPOKEN, MY LORD THANE ECTOR. AND WELL MAY THIS WORLD TREMBLE AT OUR COMING--
--FOR DID WE NOT ONCE LAY WASTE A THOUSAND, THOUSAND WORLDS?
INDEED WE DID! SOON OUR WARRIORS WILL DRINK THE DEATH-BLOOD OF THIS GREEN-WASHED PLANET! AND I SHALL DANCE ON THE WHITE-BLEACHED BONES OF POOR, POOR HUMANITY!

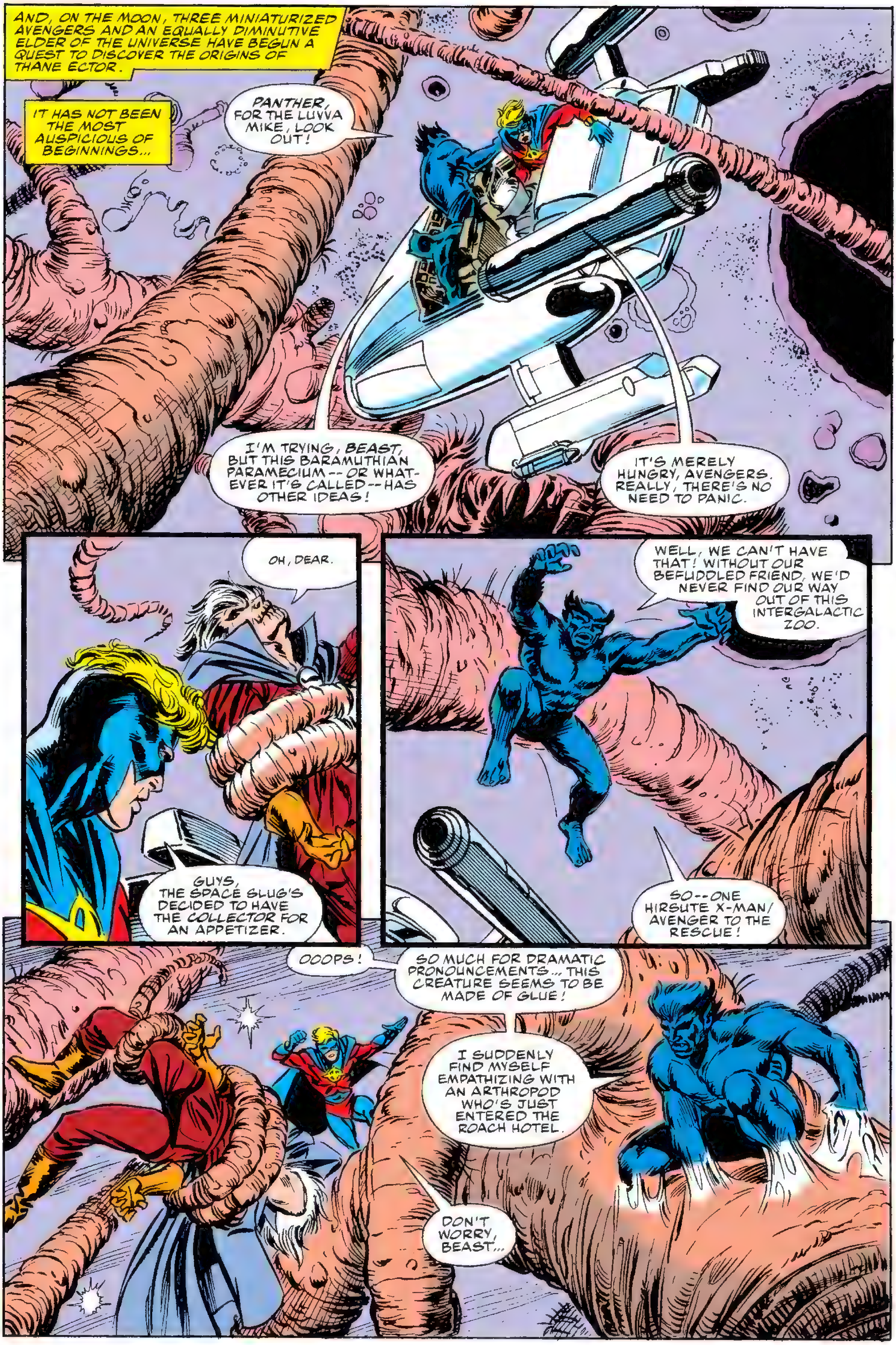
A TALE OF BATTLE AND FURY BY... | BOB HARRAS *writer* | STEVEN EPTING *penciler* | TOM PALMER *inker* | BILL OAKLEY *letterer* | CHRISTIE SCHEELE *colorist* | RALPH MACCHIO *editor* | TOM DEFALCO *editor in chief*

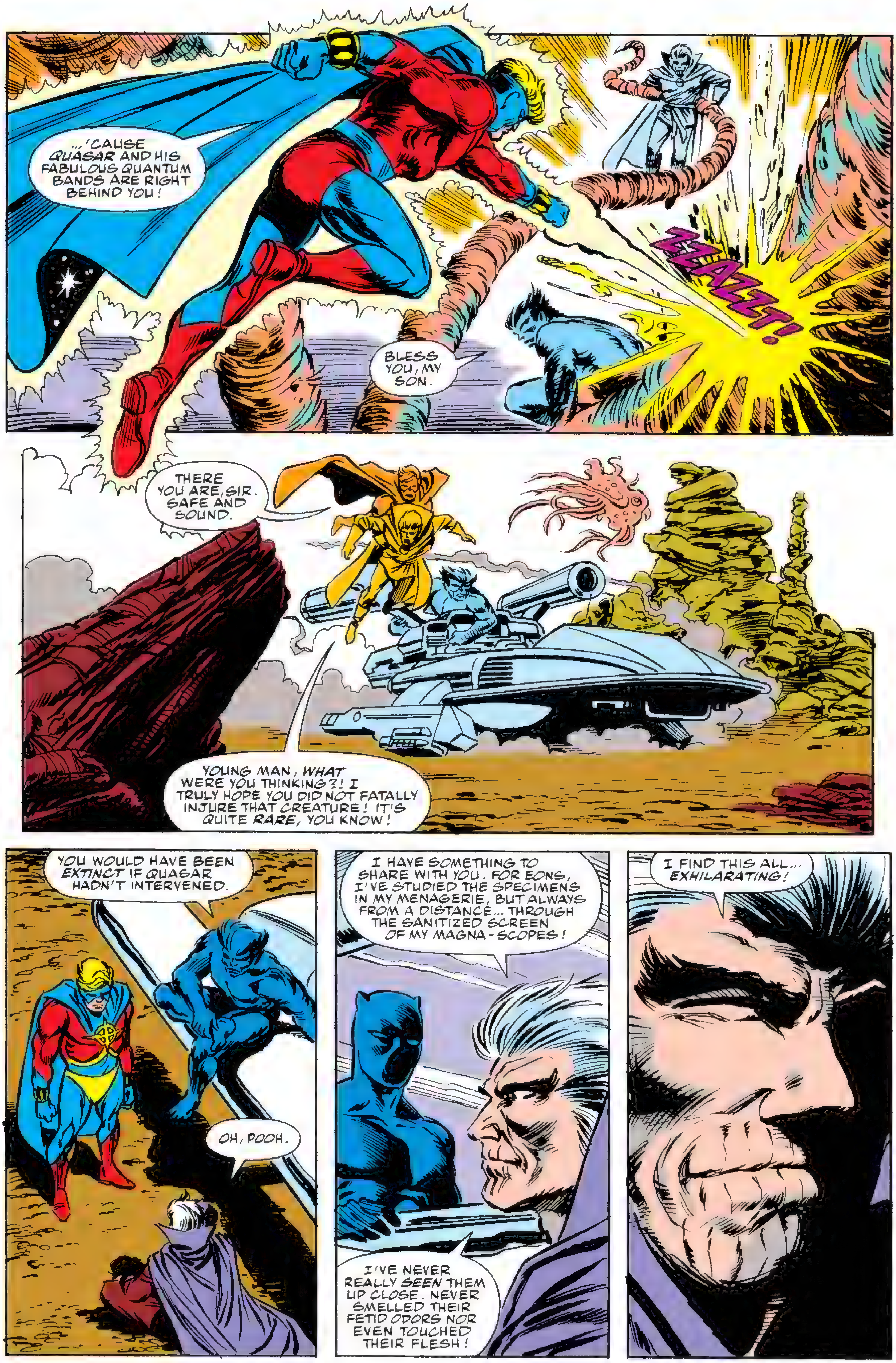

THE WORLD TRADE CENTER IN LOWER MANHATTAN...
...ONCE THE TALLEST BUILDING IN THE WORLD.
NOT MUCH OF NOTICE HAS HAPPENED THERE OF LATE.
UNTIL TODAY...
...WHEN THE VERY MOLECULES IN THE AIR GLOW AS DIMENSIONS WARP AND REND...
...AND WHERE ONCE STOOD TWO RATHER INNOCUOUS TOWERS...
...STANDS THE CITADEL OF THANE ECTOR!

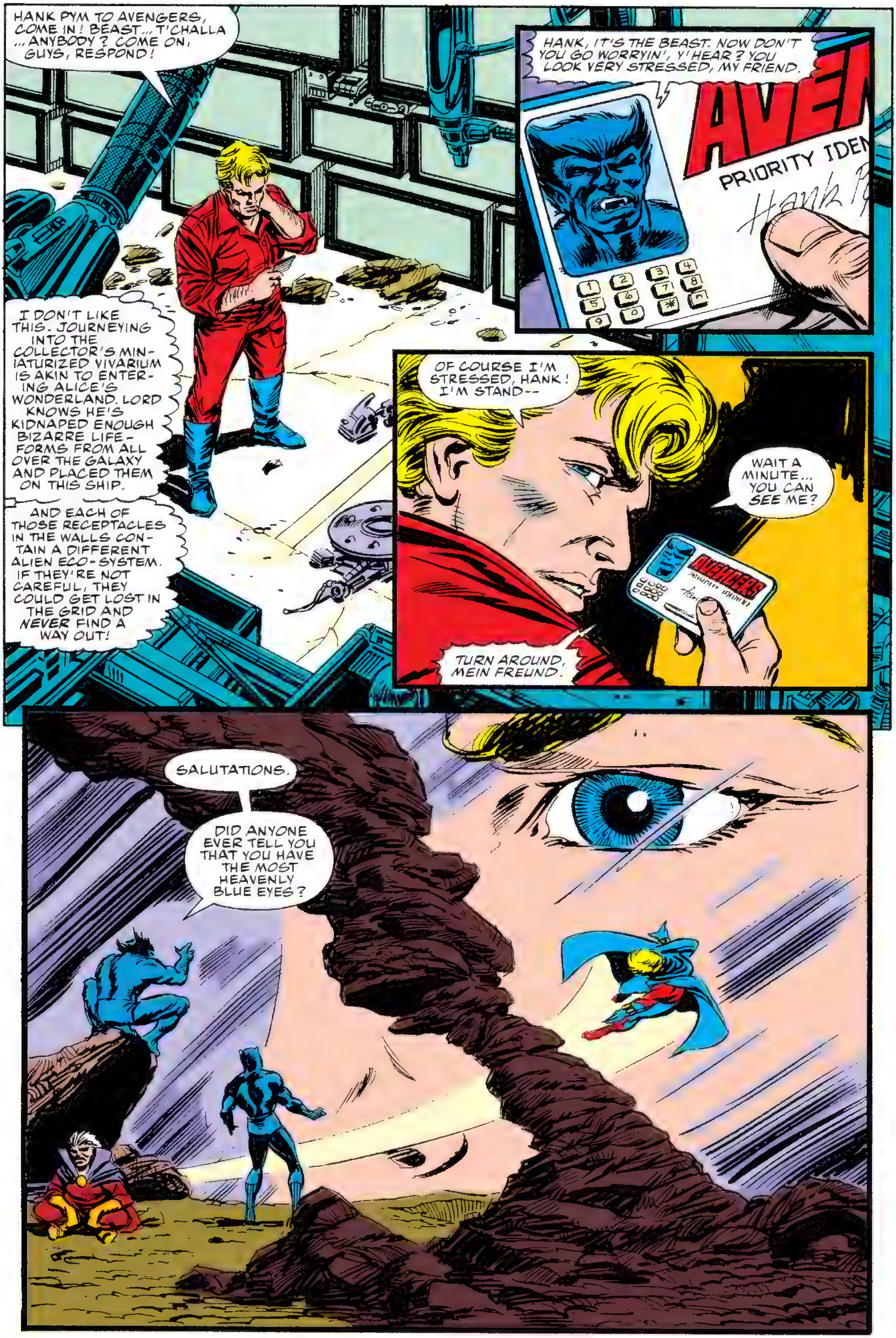

TERRANS, FOR THREE DAYS I HAVE TESTED YOUR METTLE, PROBED YOUR DEFENSES, AND I HAVE FOUND THEM WANTING.
MY PEOPLE ONCE SAILED THE STARWAYS, SEEKING GLORY AND POWER. LEGENDS TOLD OF OUR COMING. BUT OUR NOBLE, VIBRANT RACE WAS ROBBED OF OUR DIGNITY AND OUR DESTINY BY UNCARING FATE.
BUT NOW WE CLAIM THAT GLORY AND THAT DESTINY AGAIN THIS DAY! IT IS CONSTANT OF THE UNIVERSE THAT THE WEAK MUST FALL BEFORE THE STRONG -- THUS, I CLAIM THIS WORLD FOR THE BRETHREN!
NO LEFT TURN
WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?
BEATS ME!
OBOY
TELEPORT SUCCESSFUL.
FZMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM
ENGAGE IN ESTABLISHING CITADEL DEFENSIVE PARAMETERS.
FRAZZT
ALL TERRAN LIFEFORMS MUST BE ERADICATED FROM THIS SECTOR -- SO ORDERS THANE ECTOR.

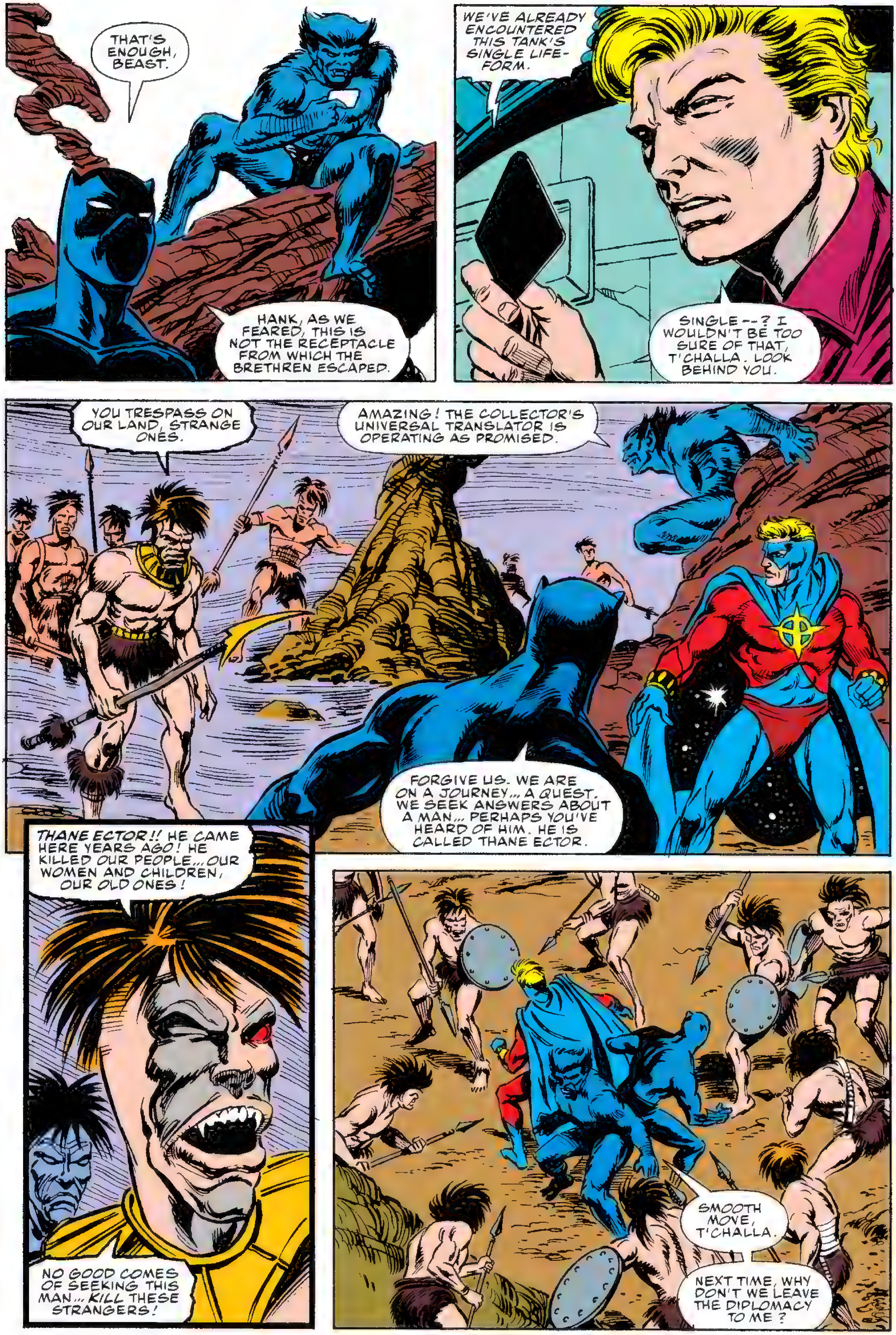

EARLIER, UPTOWN, IN AVENGERS MANSION, IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES...
AS YOU CAN SEE, CAPTAIN AMERICA, ALL EFFORTS TO REPULSE THESE BRETHREN HAVE MET WITH WORLD-WIDE FAILURE... AND THAT'S BAD, VERY BAD!
OUR OWN ENCOUNTERS WITH THANE ECTOR HAVEN'T EXACTLY BEEN STELLAR PERFORMANCES, SIR.
BUT I HAVE FAITH IN YOU, CAP! THIS THANE FELLA AND HIS AGGRESSION CANNOT STAND!
I'VE GOT SHIELD ON HIGH ALERT! ALL THE ARMED SERVICES ON THE HIGHEST STAND-BY. BUT WE'RE GOIN' TO NEED YOU SUPER-GUYS, YOU AVENGERS!
WE'VE CONTACTED THE AVENGERS WEST, MR. PRESIDENT. SOME ARE ALREADY IN NEW YORK. THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE DOING ALL THEY CAN.
WE ALSO HAVE AVENGERS ON THE MOON, CHECKING INTO THE BRETHREN'S ORIGIN. WE MAY LEARN SOMETHING UP THERE WE CAN USE.
GOOD! I'LL REPORT TO THE CABINET! I'M GLAD YOU'RE RECOVERING SO WELL, CAP. GAVE US ALL A SCARE WITH THAT FIGHT YOU HAD WITH THE THANE GUY...
... BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL MYSELF. NO FUN, EH?
NO, SIR.
I'LL CONTACT YOU THIS EVENING FOR AN UPDATE.
WELL, AVENGERS?

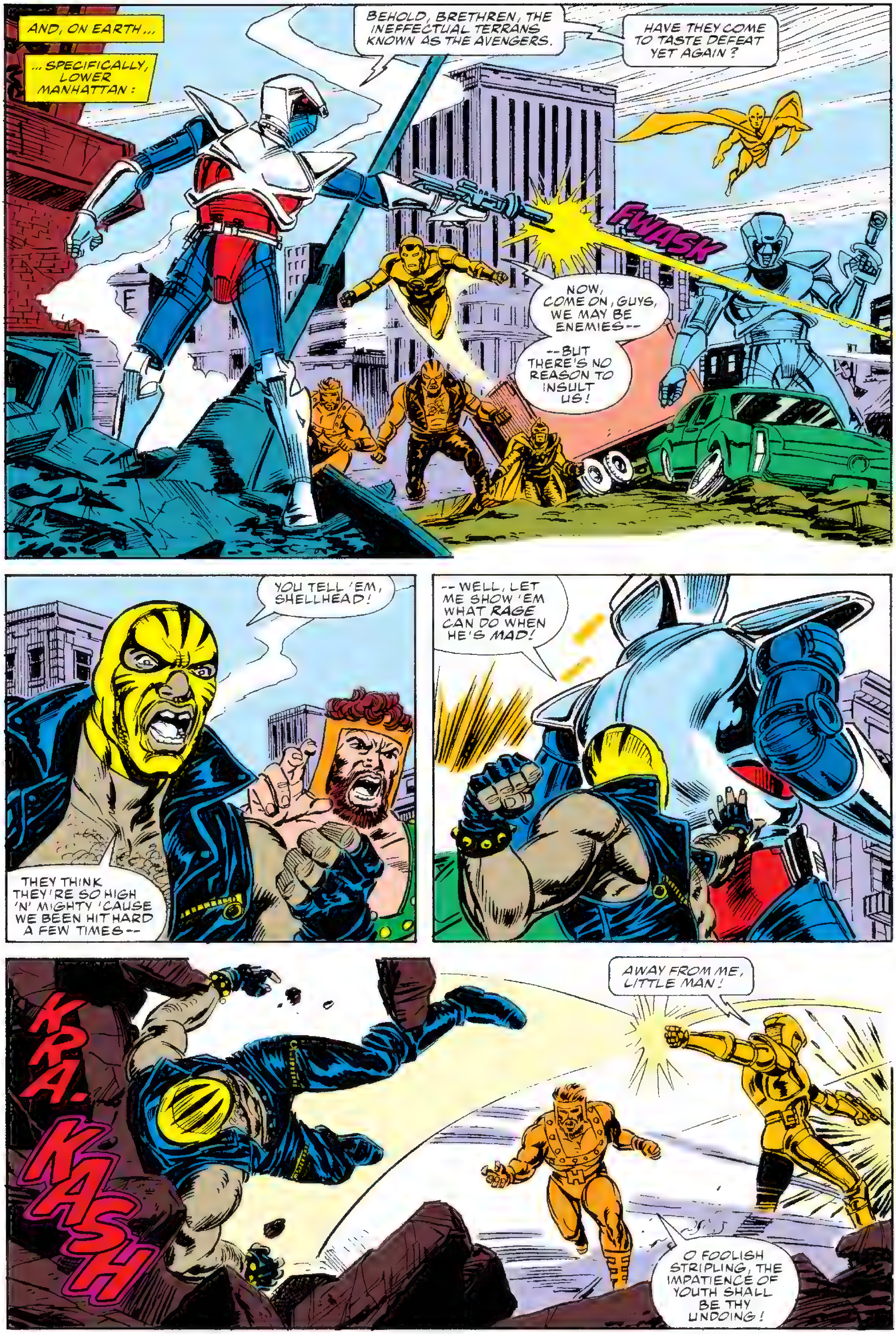

I SEE I GOT HERE JUST IN TIME, CAP.
WHATEVER MY EBONY SWORD AND I CAN DO TO HELP, YOU'VE JUST GOTTA ASK.
THANKS FOR RESPONDING TO MY SUMMONS SO QUICKLY, *BLACK KNIGHT*. IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK.
YOU, TOO, *IRON MAN*. WE MAY NEED THE EXPERTISE OF ONE OF THE ORIGINAL AVENGERS IN THIS FIGHT.
HEY, I WAS MISSING THE BIG APPLE ANYWAY, CAP.
BUT... HOW'RE YOU FEELING, OLD FRIEND?
RECOVERING, SHELLHEAD...
WE'VE GOT A TOUGH BATTLE AHEAD OF US. WE'RE FIGHTING A MENACE WE DON'T UNDERSTAND... WHOSE SAVAGERY GIVES HIM AN UNDENIABLE EDGE.
...WHICH IS MORE THAN COULD BE SAID OF MOST OF THANE'S VICTIMS.
BUT WE'RE AVENGERS FOR A REASON...
...BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT NO BEING, NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL, HAS THE RIGHT TO THREATEN THE LIVES AND LIBERTY OF HUMANITY. ECTOR IS NO DIFFERENT.
STEVE, PEGGY CARTER HERE. THIS IS IT. ECTOR'S APPEARED AT THE TRADE CENTER. HIS TROOPS ARE LAUNCHING A MAJOR CAMPAIGN...
YOU HEARD THE LADY, AVENGERS.
I WISH I COULD BE OUT THERE WITH YOU. GOOD LUCK.
STEVE...
PLEASE, NATASHA, NOT THE OLD "THEY ALSO SERVE WHO ONLY STAND AND WAIT" SPEECH. NOT NOW.

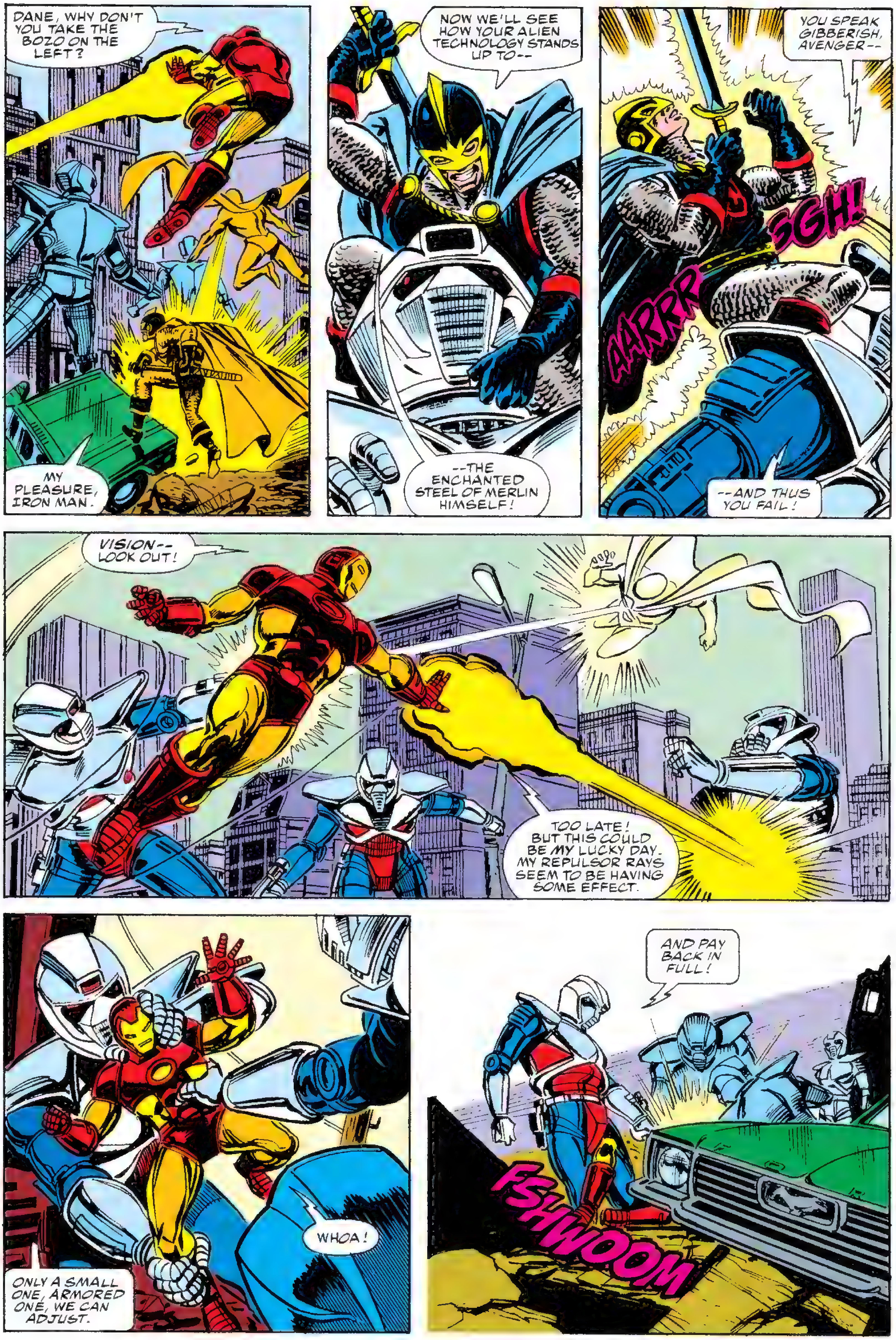

AND, ON THE MOON, THREE MINIATURIZED AVENGERS AND AN EQUALLY DIMINUTIVE ELDER OF THE UNIVERSE HAVE BEGUN A QUEST TO DISCOVER THE ORIGINS OF THANE ECTOR.
IT HAS NOT BEEN THE MOST AUSPICIOUS OF BEGINNINGS...
PANTHER, FOR THE LUVVA MIKE, LOOK OUT!
I'M TRYING, BEAST, BUT THIS BARAMUTHIAN PARAMECIUM -- OR WHATEVER IT'S CALLED -- HAS OTHER IDEAS!
IT'S MERELY HUNGRY, AVENGERS. REALLY, THERE'S NO NEED TO PANIC.
OH, DEAR.
GUYS, THE SPACE SLUG'S DECIDED TO HAVE THE COLLECTOR FOR AN APPETIZER.
WELL, WE CAN'T HAVE THAT! WITHOUT OUR BEFUDDLED FRIEND, WE'D NEVER FIND OUR WAY OUT OF THIS INTERGALACTIC ZOO.
SO -- ONE HIRSUTE X-MAN/AVENGER TO THE RESCUE!
OOOPS!
SO MUCH FOR DRAMATIC PRONOUNCEMENTS... THIS CREATURE SEEMS TO BE MADE OF GLUE!
I SUDDENLY FIND MYSELF EMPATHIZING WITH AN ARTHROPOD WHO'S JUST ENTERED THE ROACH HOTEL.
DON'T WORRY, BEAST...

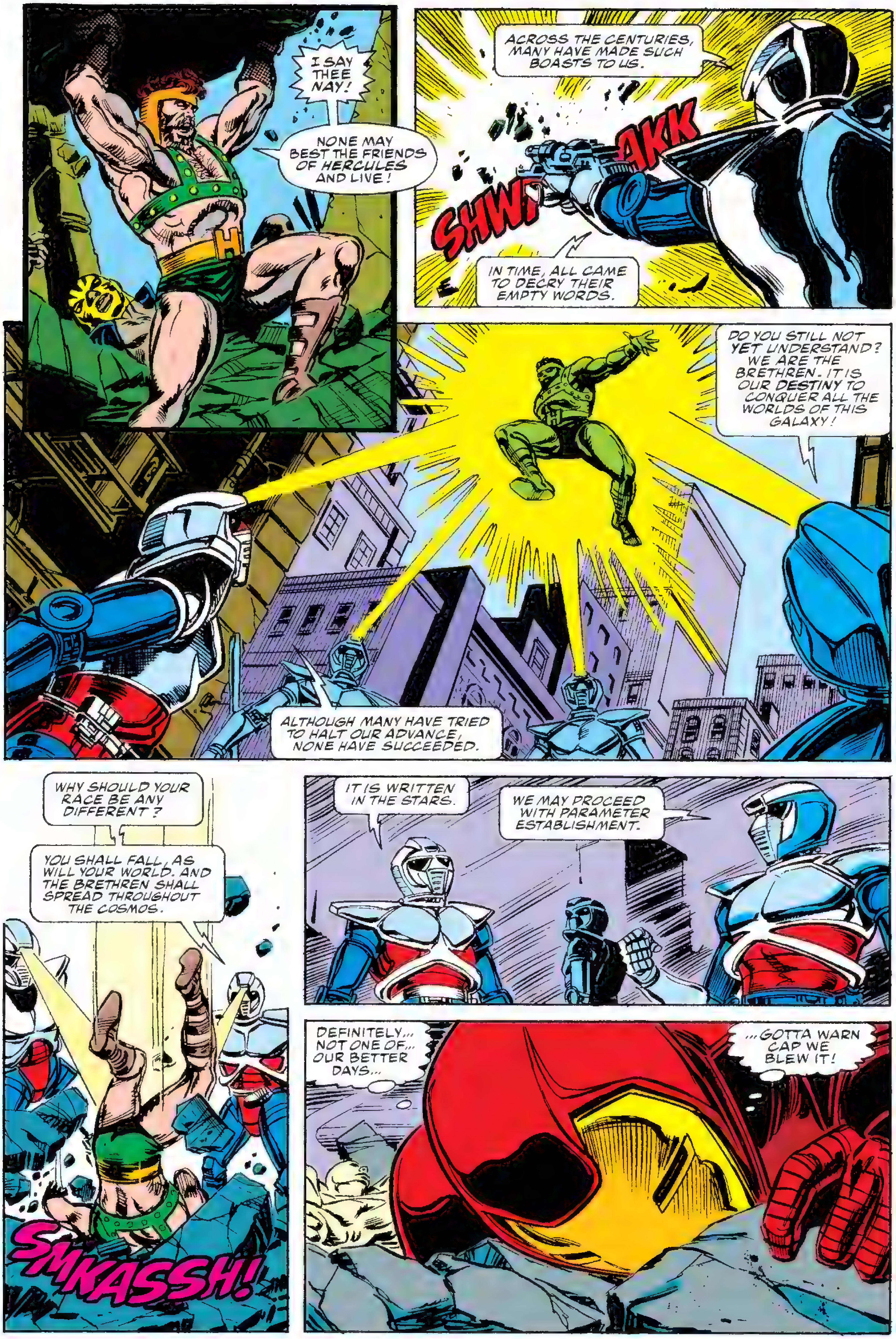

...'CAUSE *QUASAR* AND HIS FABULOUS QUANTUM BANDS ARE RIGHT BEHIND YOU!
ZZAZZT!
BLESS YOU, MY SON.
THERE YOU ARE, SIR. SAFE AND SOUND.
YOUNG MAN, *WHAT* WERE YOU THINKING?! I TRULY HOPE YOU DID NOT FATALLY INJURE THAT CREATURE! IT'S QUITE *RARE*, YOU KNOW!
YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN *EXTINCT* IF QUASAR HADN'T INTERVENED.
OH, POOH.
I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE WITH YOU. FOR EONS, I'VE STUDIED THE SPECIMENS IN MY MENAGERIE, BUT ALWAYS FROM A DISTANCE... THROUGH THE SANITIZED SCREEN OF MY MAGNA-SCOPES!
I'VE NEVER REALLY *SEEN* THEM UP CLOSE. NEVER SMELLED THEIR FETID ODORS NOR EVEN TOUCHED THEIR FLESH!
I FIND THIS ALL... *EXHILARATING!*

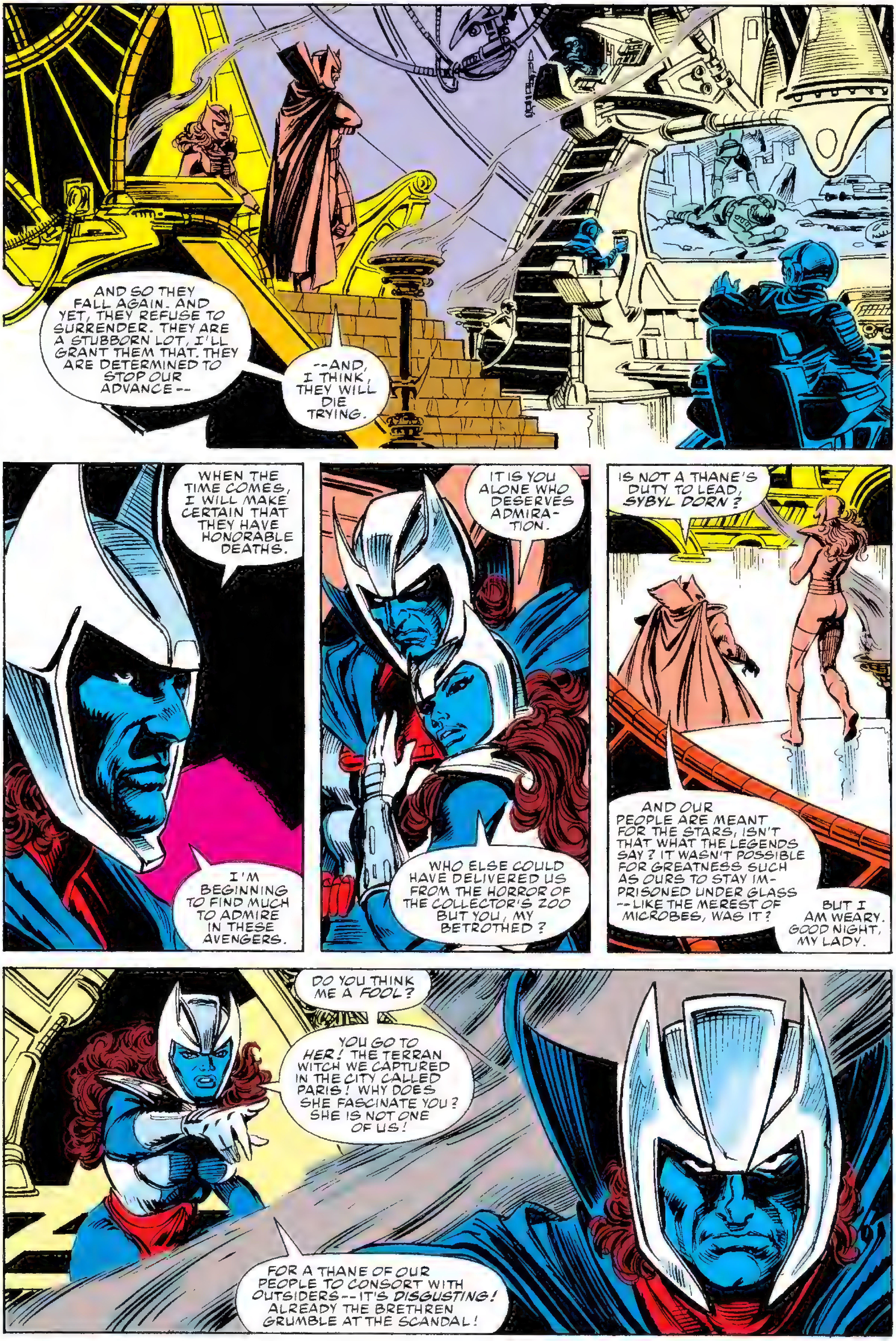

HANK PYM TO AVENGERS, COME IN! BEAST... T'CHALLA ...ANYBODY? COME ON, GUYS, RESPOND!
HANK, IT'S THE BEAST. NOW DON'T YOU GO WORRYIN', Y'HEAR? YOU LOOK VERY STRESSED, MY FRIEND.
AVE
PRIORITY IDEN
Hank P
I DON'T LIKE THIS. JOURNEYING INTO THE COLLECTOR'S MINIATURIZED VIVARIUM IS AKIN TO ENTERING ALICE'S WONDERLAND. LORD KNOWS HE'S KIDNAPED ENOUGH BIZARRE LIFE-FORMS FROM ALL OVER THE GALAXY AND PLACED THEM ON THIS SHIP.
AND EACH OF THOSE RECEPTACLES IN THE WALLS CONTAIN A DIFFERENT ALIEN ECO-SYSTEM. IF THEY'RE NOT CAREFUL, THEY COULD GET LOST IN THE GRID AND *NEVER* FIND A WAY OUT!
OF COURSE I'M STRESSED, HANK! I'M STAND--
WAIT A MINUTE... YOU CAN *SEE* ME?
AVENGERS
TURN AROUND, MEIN FREUND.
SALUTATIONS.
DID ANYONE EVER TELL YOU THAT YOU HAVE THE MOST HEAVENLY BLUE EYES?

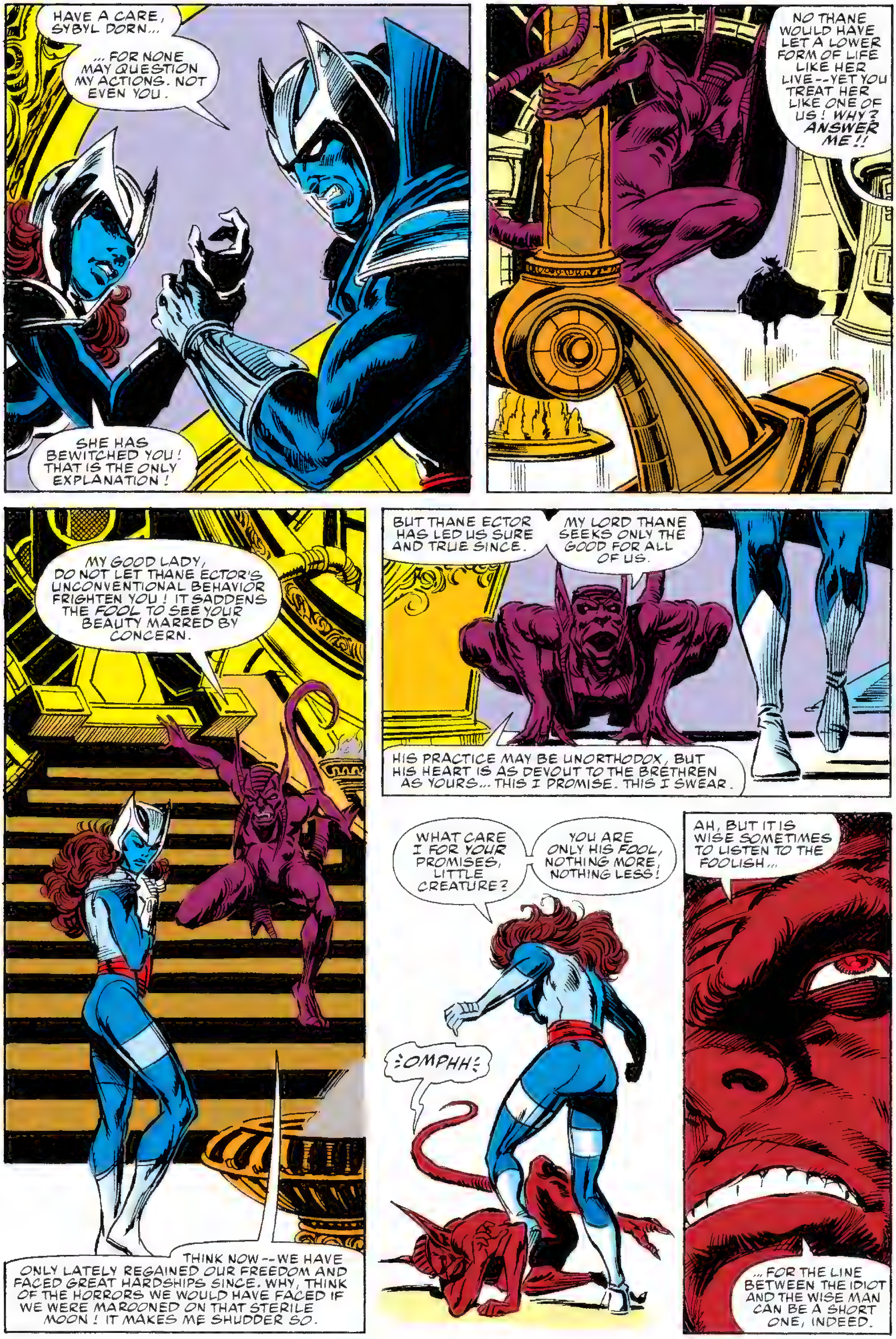

THAT'S ENOUGH, BEAST.
HANK, AS WE FEARED, THIS IS NOT THE RECEPTACLE FROM WHICH THE BRETHREN ESCAPED.
WE'VE ALREADY ENCOUNTERED THIS TANK'S SINGLE LIFE-FORM.
SINGLE--? I WOULDN'T BE TOO SURE OF THAT, T'CHALLA. LOOK BEHIND YOU.
YOU TRESPASS ON OUR LAND, STRANGE ONES.
AMAZING! THE COLLECTOR'S UNIVERSAL TRANSLATOR IS OPERATING AS PROMISED.
FORGIVE US. WE ARE ON A JOURNEY... A QUEST. WE SEEK ANSWERS ABOUT A MAN... PERHAPS YOU'VE HEARD OF HIM. HE IS CALLED THANE ECTOR.
THANE ECTOR!! HE CAME HERE YEARS AGO! HE KILLED OUR PEOPLE... OUR WOMEN AND CHILDREN, OUR OLD ONES!
NO GOOD COMES OF SEEKING THIS MAN... KILL THESE STRANGERS!
SMOOTH MOVE, T'CHALLA.
NEXT TIME, WHY DON'T WE LEAVE THE DIPLOMACY TO ME?

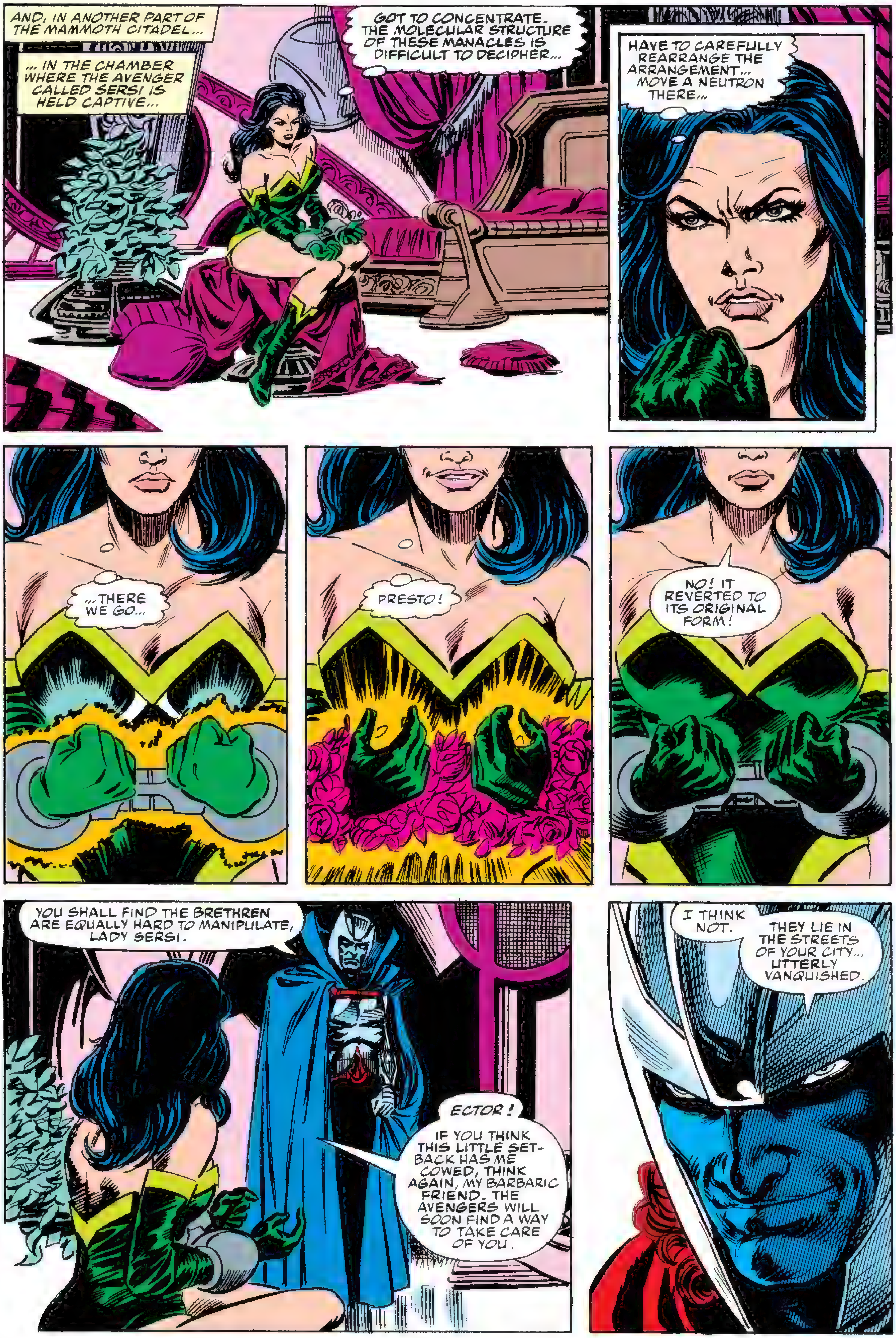

AND, ON EARTH...
...SPECIFICALLY, LOWER MANHATTAN:
BEHOLD, BRETHREN, THE INEFFECTUAL TERRANS KNOWN AS THE AVENGERS.
HAVE THEY COME TO TASTE DEFEAT YET AGAIN?
FWASK
NOW, COME ON, GUYS, WE MAY BE ENEMIES--
--BUT THERE'S NO REASON TO INSULT US!
YOU TELL 'EM, SHELLHEAD!
THEY THINK THEY'RE SO HIGH 'N' MIGHTY 'CAUSE WE BEEN HIT HARD A FEW TIMES--
--WELL, LET ME SHOW 'EM WHAT RAGE CAN DO WHEN HE'S MAD!
KRA-KASH
AWAY FROM ME, LITTLE MAN!
O FOOLISH STRIPLING, THE IMPATIENCE OF YOUTH SHALL BE THY UNDOING!

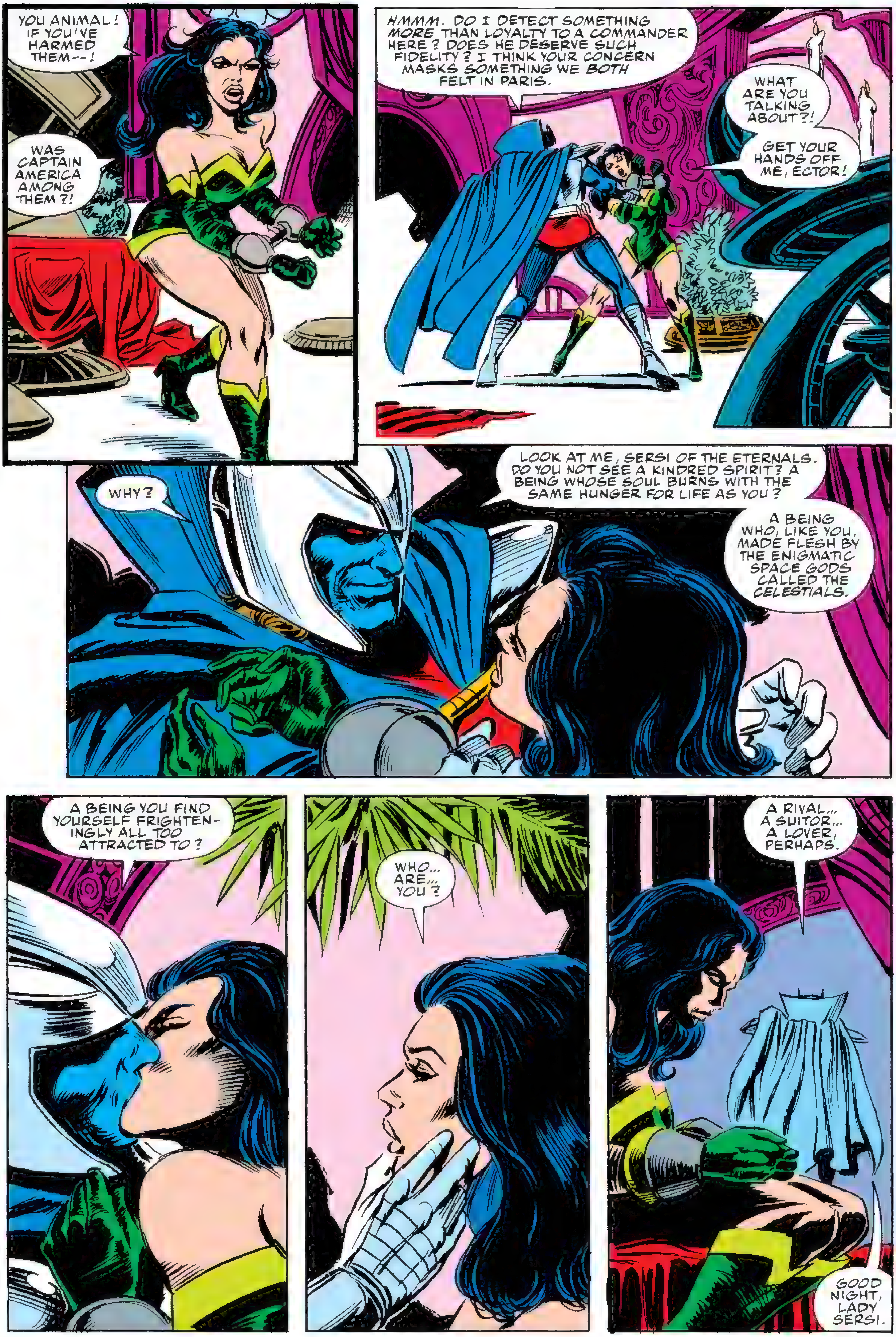

DANE, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE THE BOZO ON THE LEFT?
MY PLEASURE, IRON MAN.
NOW WE'LL SEE HOW YOUR ALIEN TECHNOLOGY STANDS UP TO--
--THE ENCHANTED STEEL OF MERLIN HIMSELF!
YOU SPEAK GIBBERISH, AVENGER--
AARRRGGH!
--AND THUS YOU FAIL!
VISION-- LOOK OUT!
TOO LATE! BUT THIS COULD BE MY LUCKY DAY. MY REPULSOR RAYS SEEM TO BE HAVING SOME EFFECT.
WHOA!
ONLY A SMALL ONE, ARMORED ONE, WE CAN ADJUST.
AND PAY BACK IN FULL!
FSHWOOM

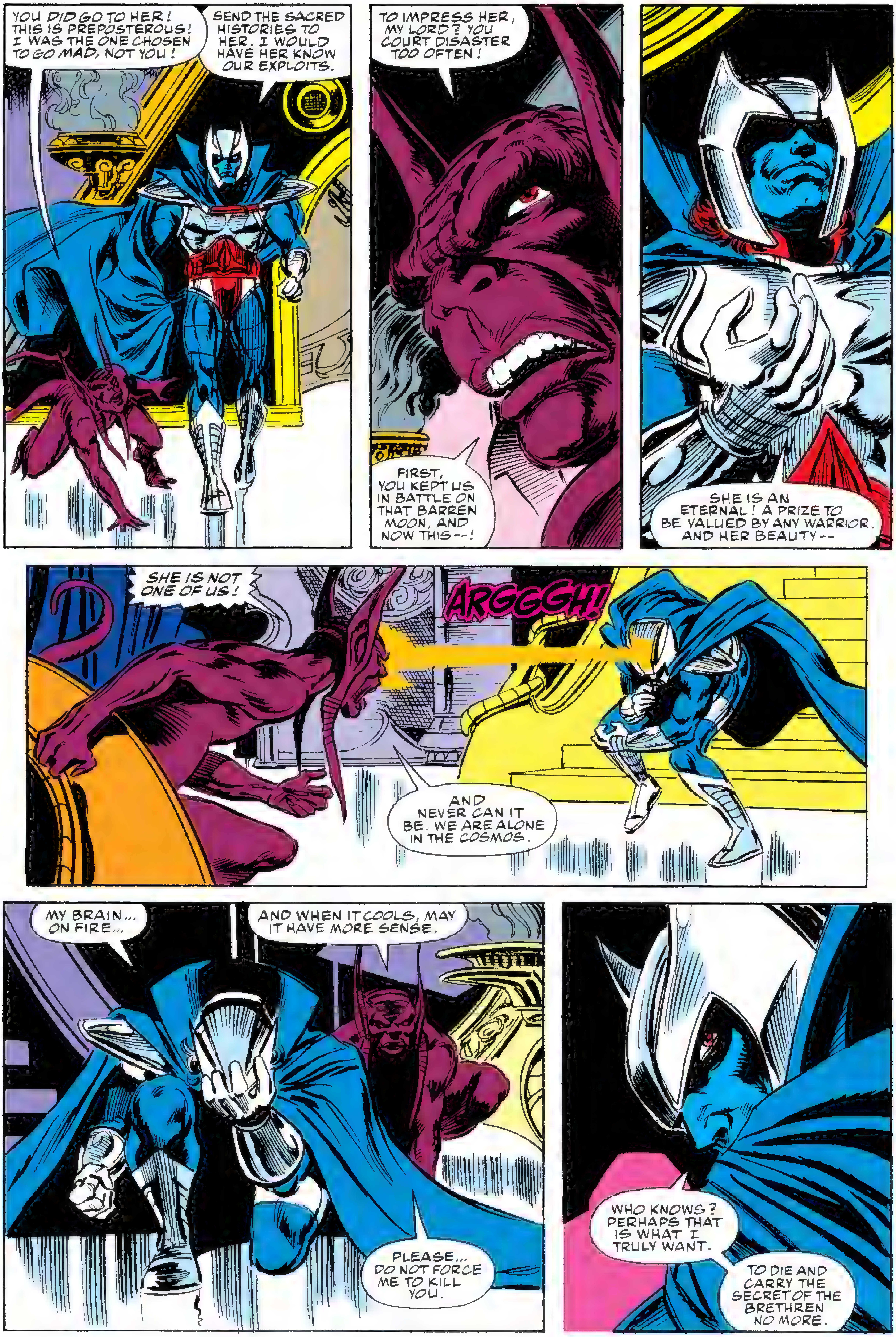

I SAY THEE NAY!
NONE MAY BEST THE FRIENDS OF HERCULES AND LIVE!
ACROSS THE CENTURIES, MANY HAVE MADE SUCH BOASTS TO US.
SHWAKK
IN TIME, ALL CAME TO DECRY THEIR EMPTY WORDS.
DO YOU STILL NOT YET UNDERSTAND? WE ARE THE BRETHREN. IT IS OUR DESTINY TO CONQUER ALL THE WORLDS OF THIS GALAXY!
ALTHOUGH MANY HAVE TRIED TO HALT OUR ADVANCE, NONE HAVE SUCCEEDED.
WHY SHOULD YOUR RACE BE ANY DIFFERENT?
YOU SHALL FALL, AS WILL YOUR WORLD. AND THE BRETHREN SHALL SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE COSMOS.
SMKASSH!
IT IS WRITTEN IN THE STARS.
WE MAY PROCEED WITH PARAMETER ESTABLISHMENT.
DEFINITELY... NOT ONE OF... OUR BETTER DAYS...
...GOTTA WARN CAP WE BLEW IT!

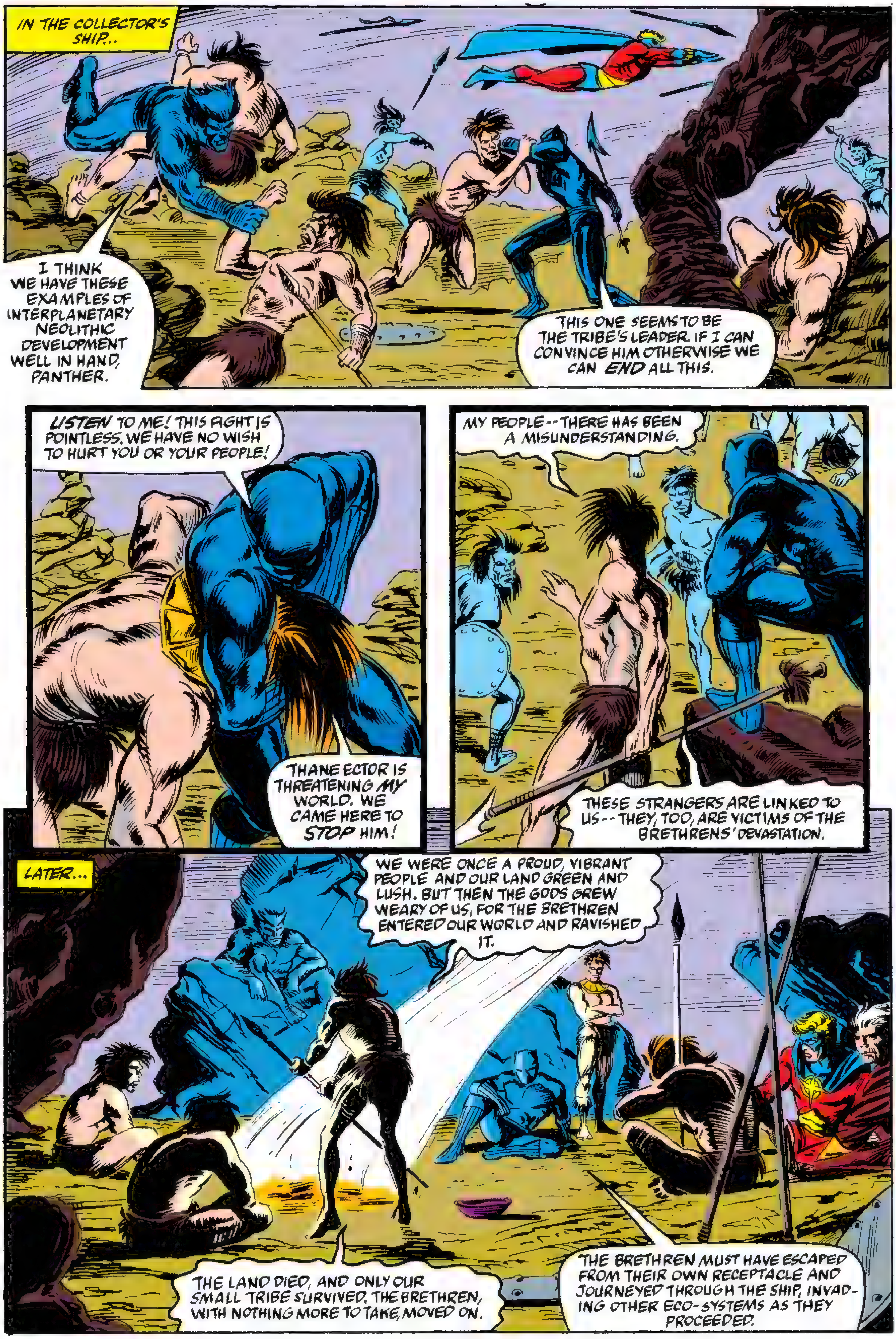

AND SO THEY FALL AGAIN. AND YET, THEY REFUSE TO SURRENDER. THEY ARE A STUBBORN LOT, I'LL GRANT THEM THAT. THEY ARE DETERMINED TO STOP OUR ADVANCE--
--AND, I THINK, THEY WILL DIE TRYING.
WHEN THE TIME COMES, I WILL MAKE CERTAIN THAT THEY HAVE HONORABLE DEATHS.
I'M BEGINNING TO FIND MUCH TO ADMIRE IN THESE AVENGERS.
IT IS YOU ALONE WHO DESERVES ADMIRATION.
WHO ELSE COULD HAVE DELIVERED US FROM THE HORROR OF THE COLLECTOR'S ZOO BUT YOU, MY BETROTHED?
IS NOT A THANE'S DUTY TO LEAD, *SYBYL DORN*?
AND OUR PEOPLE ARE MEANT FOR THE STARS, ISN'T THAT WHAT THE LEGENDS SAY? IT WASN'T POSSIBLE FOR GREATNESS SUCH AS OURS TO STAY IMPRISONED UNDER GLASS --LIKE THE MEREST OF MICROBES, WAS IT?
BUT I AM WEARY. GOOD NIGHT, MY LADY.
DO YOU THINK ME A *FOOL*?
YOU GO TO *HER*! THE TERRAN WITCH WE CAPTURED IN THE CITY CALLED PARIS! WHY DOES SHE FASCINATE YOU? SHE IS NOT ONE OF US!
FOR A THANE OF OUR PEOPLE TO CONSORT WITH OUTSIDERS--IT'S *DISGUSTING*! ALREADY THE BRETHREN GRUMBLE AT THE SCANDAL!

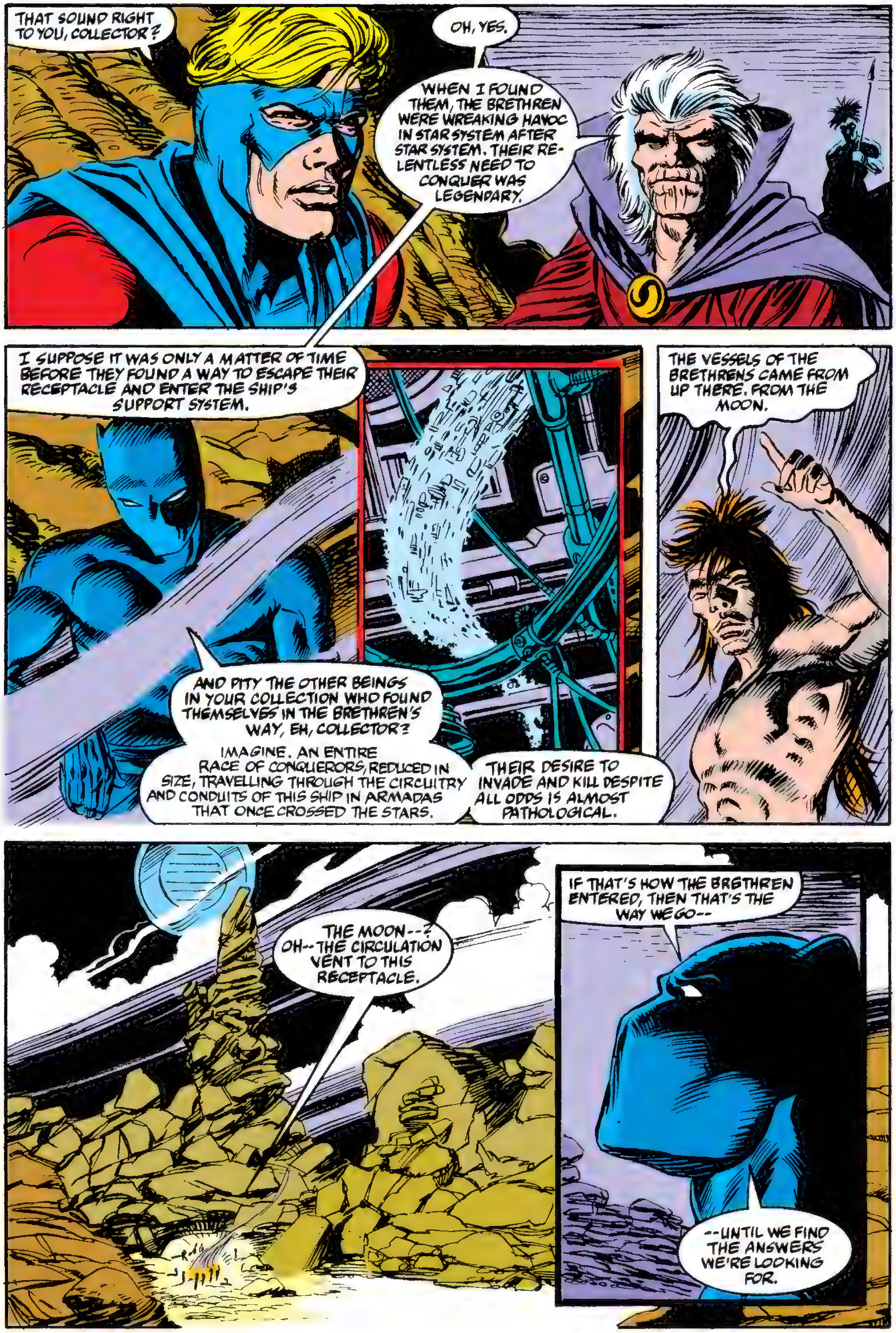

HAVE A CARE, SYBYL DORN...
...FOR NONE MAY QUESTION MY ACTIONS. NOT EVEN YOU.
SHE HAS BEWITCHED YOU! THAT IS THE ONLY EXPLANATION!
NO THANE WOULD HAVE LET A LOWER FORM OF LIFE LIKE HER LIVE--YET YOU TREAT HER LIKE ONE OF US! WHY? *ANSWER ME!!*
MY GOOD LADY, DO NOT LET THANE ECTOR'S UNCONVENTIONAL BEHAVIOR FRIGHTEN YOU! IT SADDENS THE *FOOL* TO SEE YOUR BEAUTY MARRED BY CONCERN.
THINK NOW--WE HAVE ONLY LATELY REGAINED OUR FREEDOM AND FACED GREAT HARDSHIPS SINCE. WHY, THINK OF THE HORRORS WE WOULD HAVE FACED IF WE WERE MAROONED ON THAT STERILE MOON! IT MAKES ME SHUDDER SO.
BUT THANE ECTOR HAS LED US SURE AND TRUE SINCE.
MY LORD THANE SEEKS ONLY THE GOOD FOR ALL OF US.
HIS PRACTICE MAY BE UNORTHODOX, BUT HIS HEART IS AS DEVOUT TO THE BRETHREN AS YOURS... THIS I PROMISE. THIS I SWEAR.
WHAT CARE I FOR *YOUR* PROMISES, LITTLE CREATURE?
YOU ARE ONLY HIS *FOOL*, NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS!
OMPHH!
AH, BUT IT IS WISE SOMETIMES TO LISTEN TO THE FOOLISH...
...FOR THE LINE BETWEEN THE IDIOT AND THE WISE MAN CAN BE A SHORT ONE, INDEED.

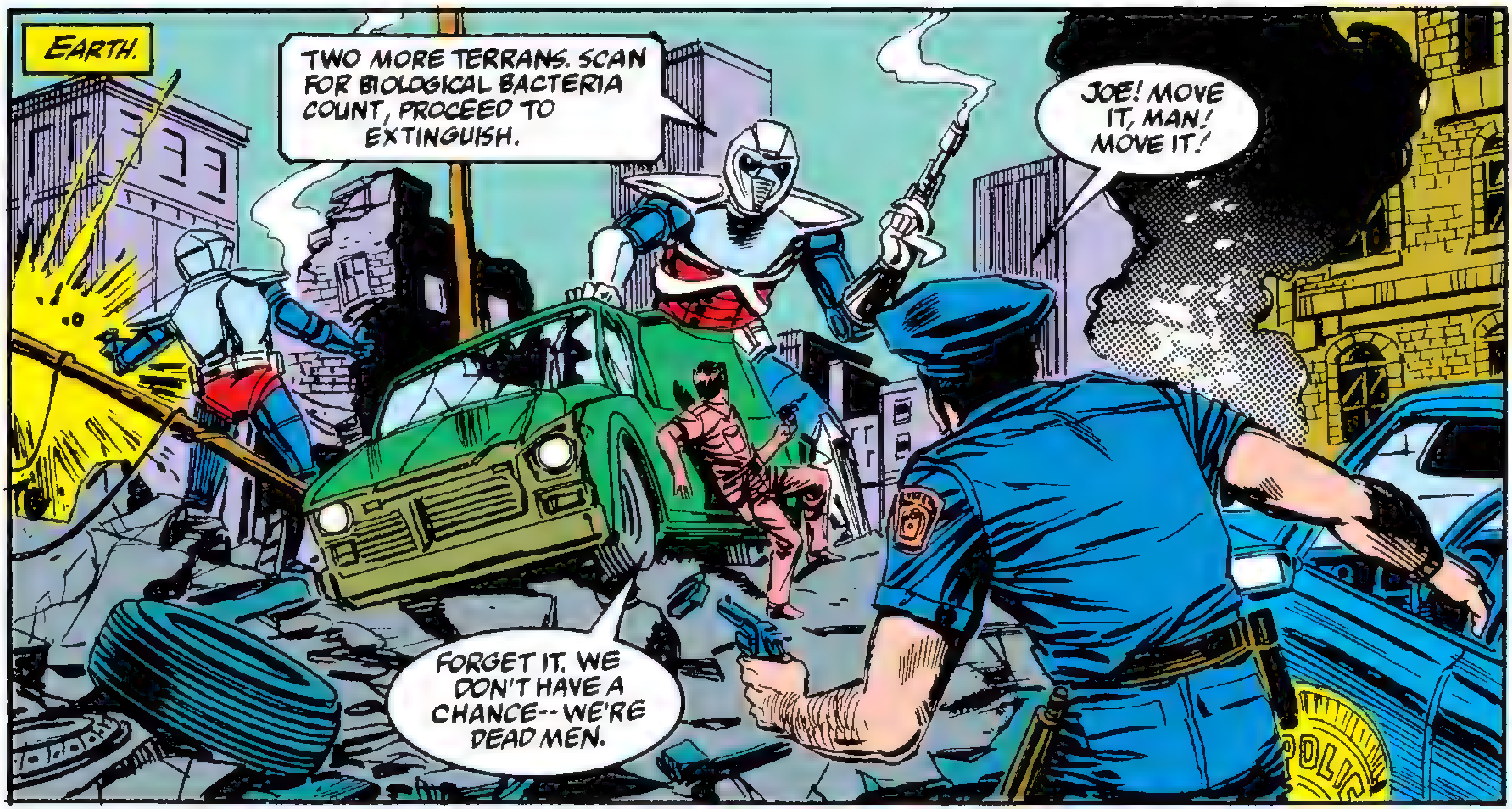

AND, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE MAMMOTH CITADEL...
... IN THE CHAMBER WHERE THE AVENGER CALLED SERSI IS HELD CAPTIVE...
GOT TO CONCENTRATE. THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF THESE MANACLES IS DIFFICULT TO DECIPHER...
HAVE TO CAREFULLY REARRANGE THE ARRANGEMENT... MOVE A NEUTRON THERE...
... THERE WE GO...
PRESTO!
NO! IT REVERTED TO ITS ORIGINAL FORM!
YOU SHALL FIND THE BRETHREN ARE EQUALLY HARD TO MANIPULATE, LADY SERSI.
ECTOR!
IF YOU THINK THIS LITTLE SET-BACK HAS ME COWED, THINK AGAIN, MY BARBARIC FRIEND. THE AVENGERS WILL SOON FIND A WAY TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.
I THINK NOT.
THEY LIE IN THE STREETS OF YOUR CITY... UTTERLY VANQUISHED.

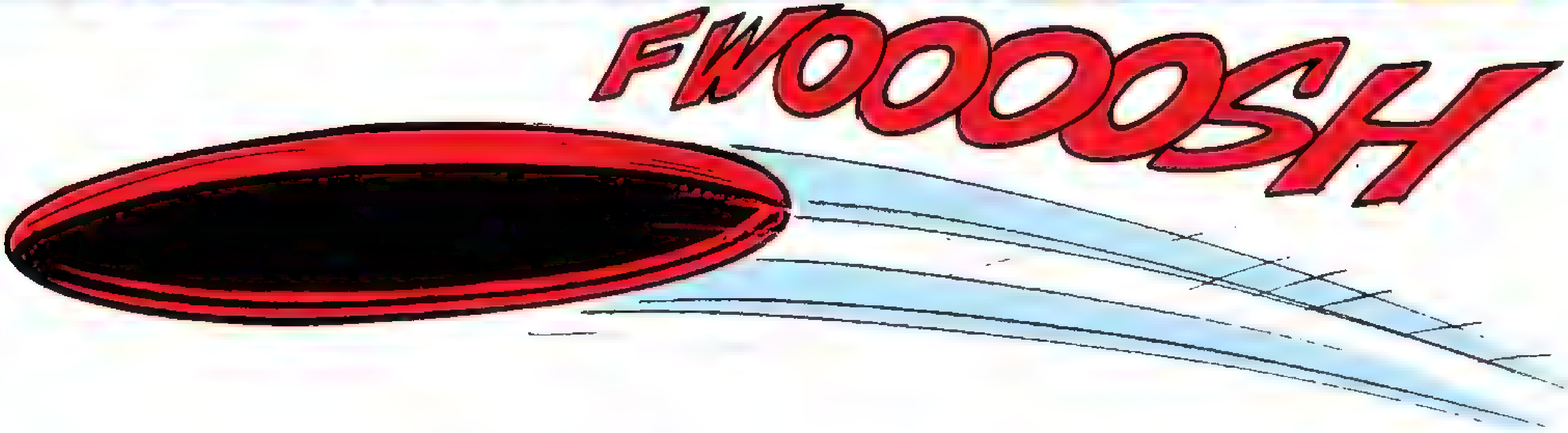

YOU ANIMAL! IF YOU'VE HARMED THEM--!
WAS CAPTAIN AMERICA AMONG THEM?!
HMMM. DO I DETECT SOMETHING *MORE* THAN LOYALTY TO A COMMANDER HERE? DOES HE DESERVE SUCH FIDELITY? I THINK YOUR CONCERN MASKS SOMETHING WE *BOTH* FELT IN PARIS.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME, ECTOR!
WHY?
LOOK AT ME, SERSI OF THE ETERNALS. DO YOU NOT SEE A KINDRED SPIRIT? A BEING WHOSE SOUL BURNS WITH THE SAME HUNGER FOR LIFE AS YOU?
A BEING WHO, LIKE YOU, MADE FLESH BY THE ENIGMATIC SPACE GODS CALLED THE CELESTIALS.
A BEING YOU FIND YOURSELF FRIGHTENINGLY ALL TOO ATTRACTED TO?
WHO... ARE... YOU?
A RIVAL... A SUITOR... A LOVER, PERHAPS.
GOOD NIGHT, LADY SERSI.

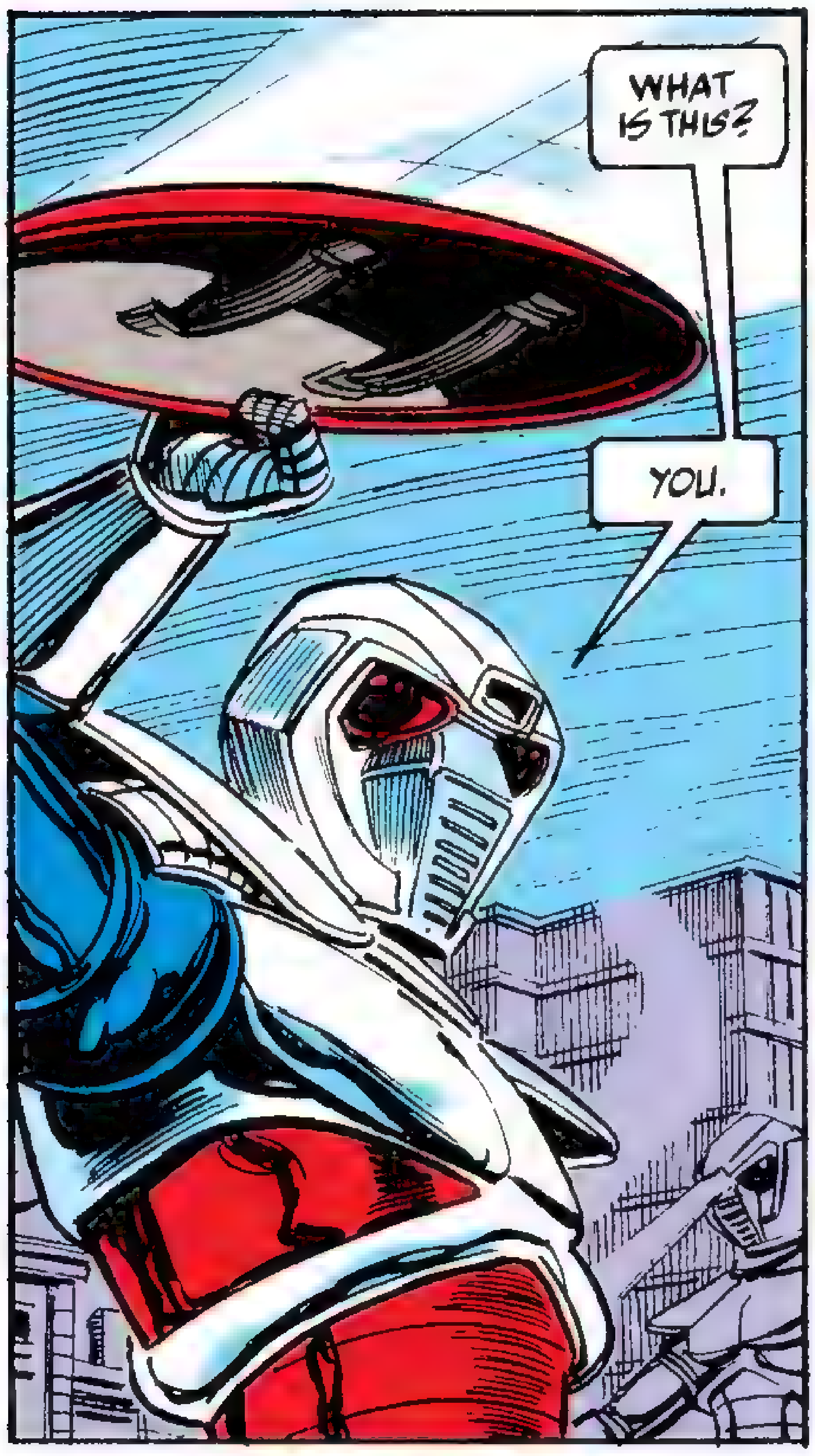

YOU *DID* GO TO HER! THIS IS PREPOSTEROUS! I WAS THE ONE CHOSEN TO GO *MAD*, NOT YOU!
SEND THE SACRED HISTORIES TO HER. I WOULD HAVE HER KNOW OUR EXPLOITS.
TO IMPRESS HER, MY LORD? YOU COURT DISASTER TOO OFTEN!
FIRST, YOU KEPT US IN BATTLE ON THAT BARREN MOON, AND NOW THIS--!
SHE IS AN ETERNAL! A PRIZE TO BE VALUED BY ANY WARRIOR. AND HER BEAUTY--
SHE IS NOT ONE OF US!
ARGGGH!
AND NEVER CAN IT BE. WE ARE ALONE IN THE COSMOS.
MY BRAIN... ON FIRE...
AND WHEN IT COOLS, MAY IT HAVE MORE SENSE.
PLEASE... DO NOT FORCE ME TO KILL YOU.
WHO KNOWS? PERHAPS THAT IS WHAT I TRULY WANT.
TO DIE AND CARRY THE SECRET OF THE BRETHREN NO MORE.

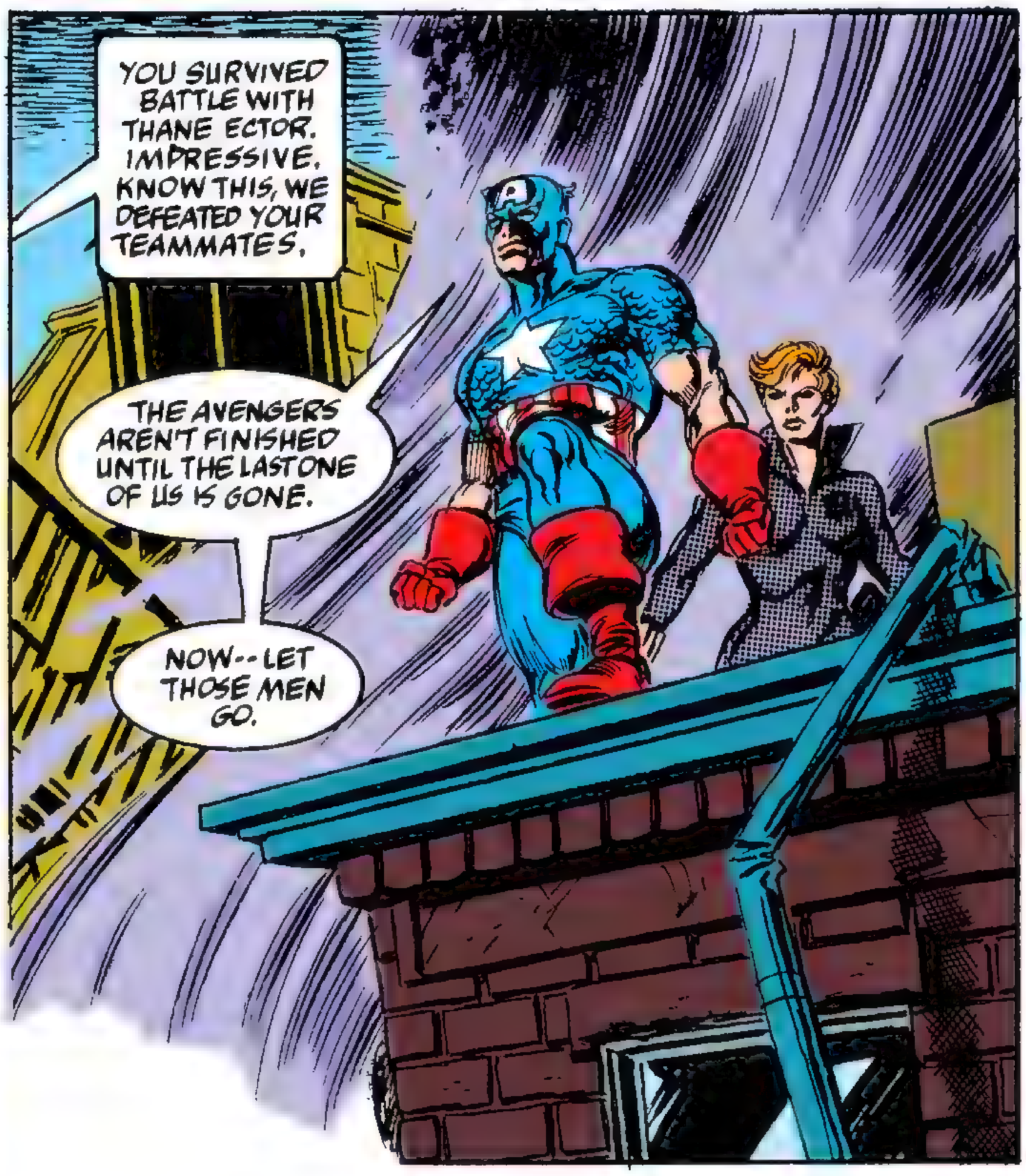

IN THE COLLECTOR'S SHIP...
I THINK WE HAVE THESE EXAMPLES OF INTERPLANETARY NEOLITHIC DEVELOPMENT WELL IN HAND, PANTHER.
THIS ONE SEEMS TO BE THE TRIBE'S LEADER. IF I CAN CONVINCE HIM OTHERWISE WE CAN *END* ALL THIS.
LISTEN TO ME! THIS FIGHT IS POINTLESS. WE HAVE NO WISH TO HURT YOU OR YOUR PEOPLE!
THANE ECTOR IS THREATENING *MY* WORLD. WE CAME HERE TO *STOP* HIM!
MY PEOPLE--THERE HAS BEEN A MISUNDERSTANDING.
THESE STRANGERS ARE LINKED TO US--THEY, TOO, ARE VICTIMS OF THE BRETHRENS' DEVASTATION.
LATER...
WE WERE ONCE A PROUD, VIBRANT PEOPLE AND OUR LAND GREEN AND LUSH. BUT THEN THE GODS GREW WEARY OF US, FOR THE BRETHREN ENTERED OUR WORLD AND RAVISHED IT.
THE LAND DIED, AND ONLY OUR SMALL TRIBE SURVIVED. THE BRETHREN, WITH NOTHING MORE TO TAKE, MOVED ON.
THE BRETHREN MUST HAVE ESCAPED FROM THEIR OWN RECEPTACLE AND JOURNEYED THROUGH THE SHIP, INVADING OTHER ECO-SYSTEMS AS THEY PROCEEDED.

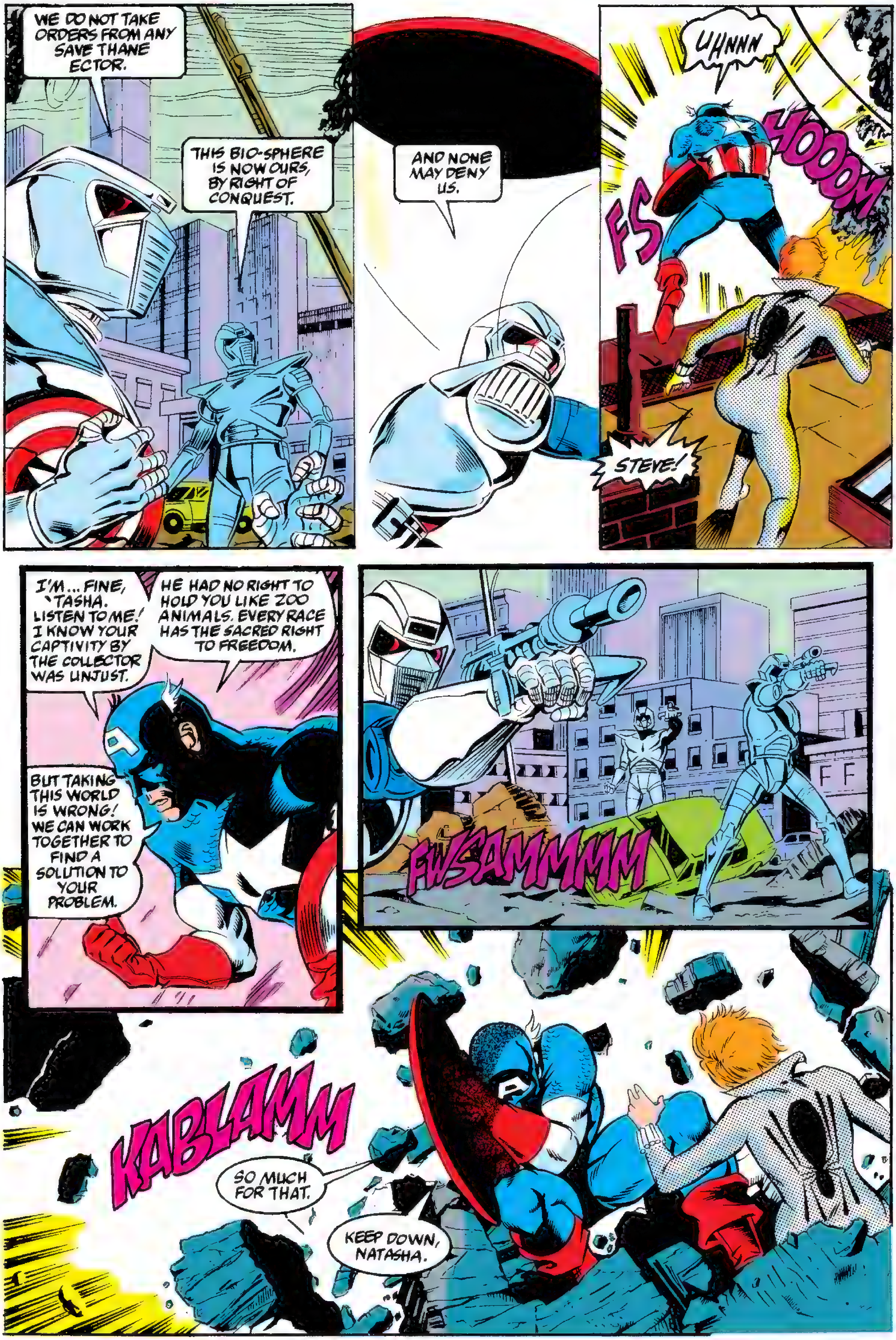

THAT SOUND RIGHT TO YOU, COLLECTOR?
OH, YES.
WHEN I FOUND THEM, THE BRETHREN WERE WREAKING HAVOC IN STAR SYSTEM AFTER STAR SYSTEM. THEIR RELENTLESS NEED TO CONQUER WAS LEGENDARY.
I SUPPOSE IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY FOUND A WAY TO ESCAPE THEIR RECEPTACLE AND ENTER THE SHIP'S SUPPORT SYSTEM.
AND PITY THE OTHER BEINGS IN YOUR COLLECTION WHO FOUND THEMSELVES IN THE BRETHREN'S WAY, EH, COLLECTOR?
IMAGINE. AN ENTIRE RACE OF CONQUERORS, REDUCED IN SIZE, TRAVELLING THROUGH THE CIRCUITRY AND CONDUITS OF THIS SHIP IN ARMADAS THAT ONCE CROSSED THE STARS.
THEIR DESIRE TO INVADE AND KILL DESPITE ALL ODDS IS ALMOST PATHOLOGICAL.
THE VESSELS OF THE BRETHRENS CAME FROM UP THERE. FROM THE MOON.
THE MOON--? OH--THE CIRCULATION VENT TO THIS RECEPTACLE.
IF THAT'S HOW THE BRETHREN ENTERED, THEN THAT'S THE WAY WE GO--
--UNTIL WE FIND THE ANSWERS WE'RE LOOKING FOR.

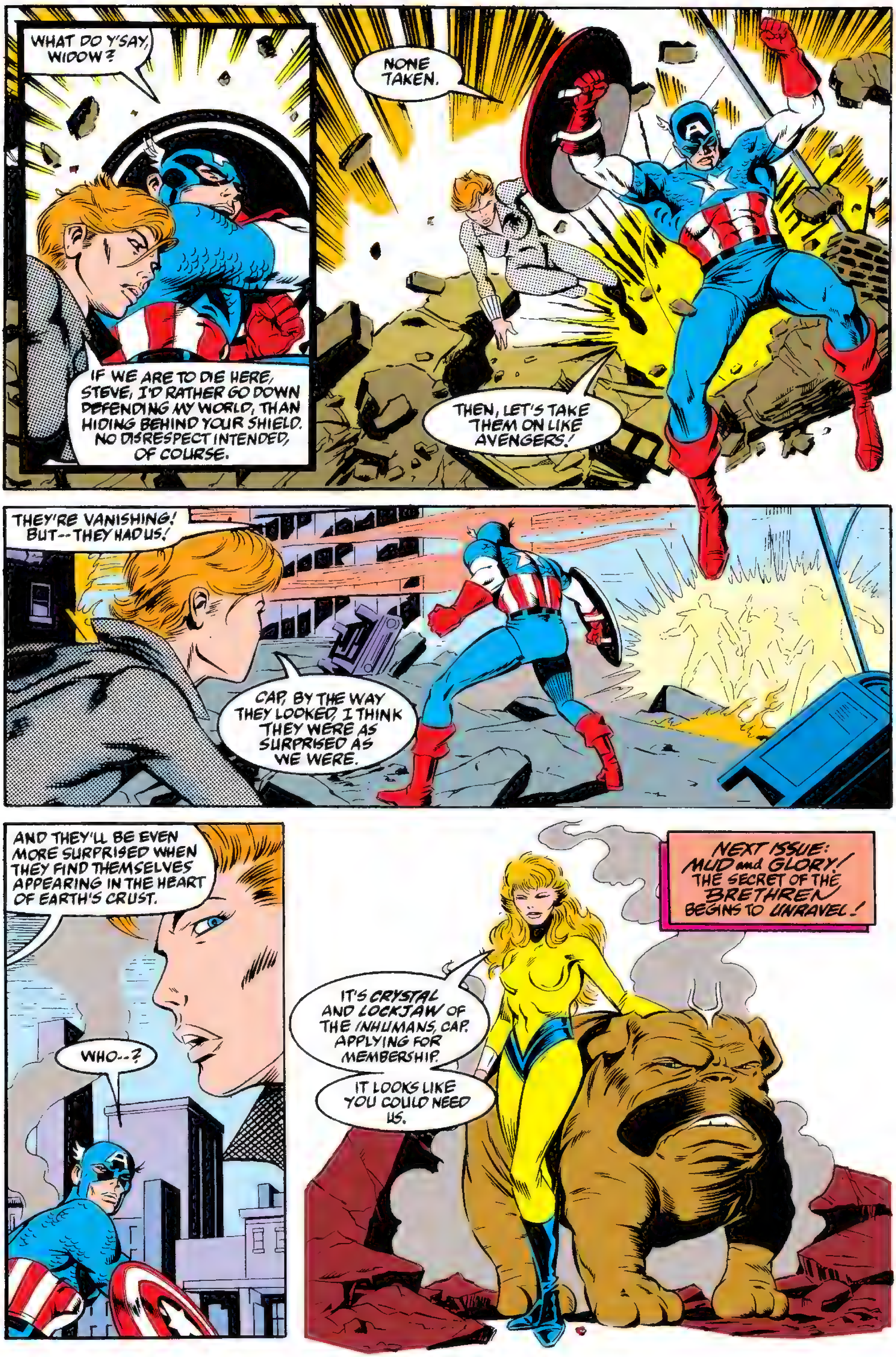

EARTH.
TWO MORE TERRANS. SCAN FOR BIOLOGICAL BACTERIA COUNT, PROCEED TO EXTINGUISH.
JOE! MOVE IT, MAN! MOVE IT!
FORGET IT. WE DON'T HAVE A CHANCE--WE'RE DEAD MEN.
POLICE


FWOOOOSH


WHAT IS THIS?
YOU.

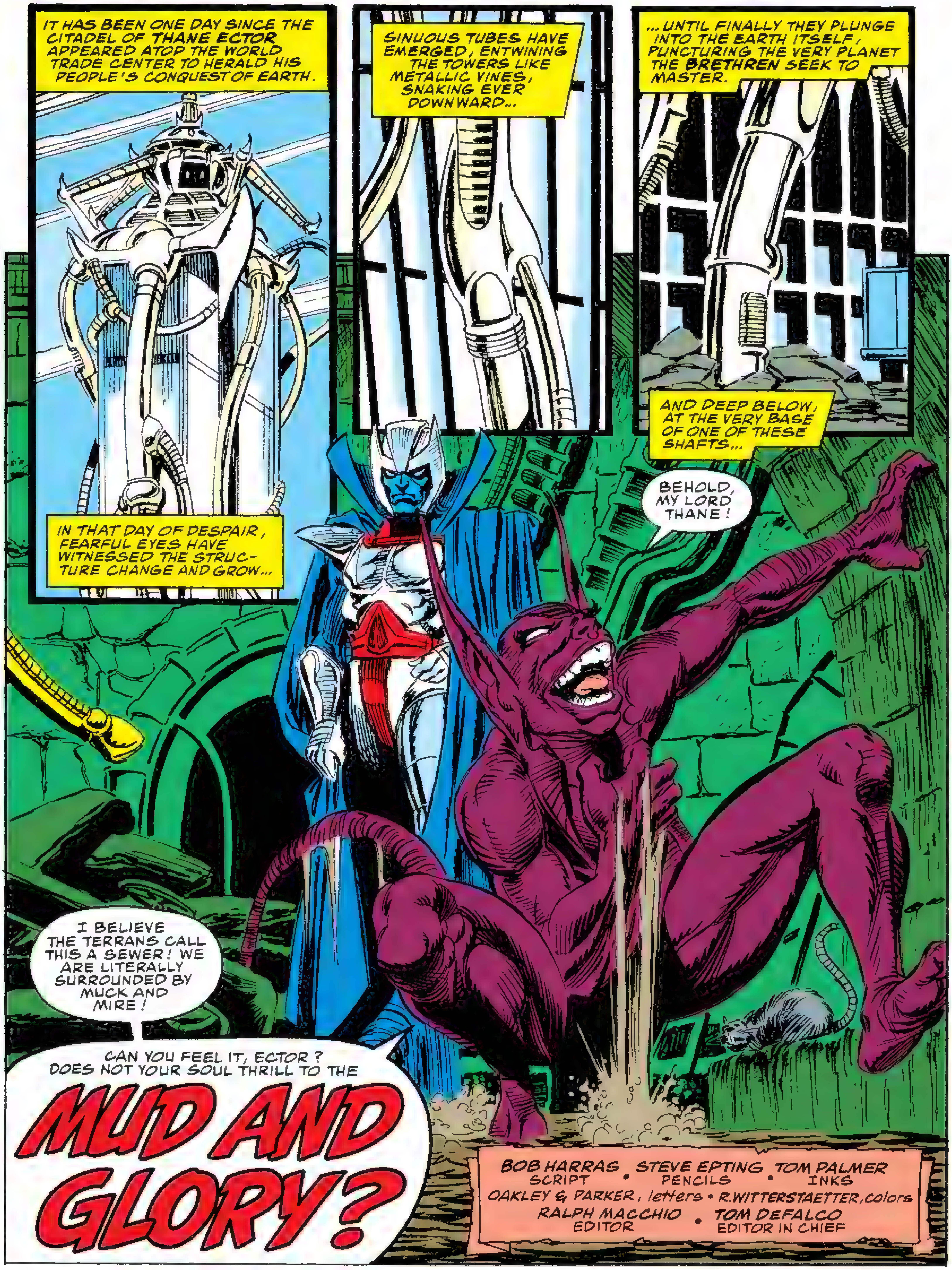

YOU SURVIVED BATTLE WITH THANE ECTOR. IMPRESSIVE. KNOW THIS, WE DEFEATED YOUR TEAMMATES.
THE AVENGERS AREN'T FINISHED UNTIL THE LAST ONE OF US IS GONE.
NOW--LET THOSE MEN GO.

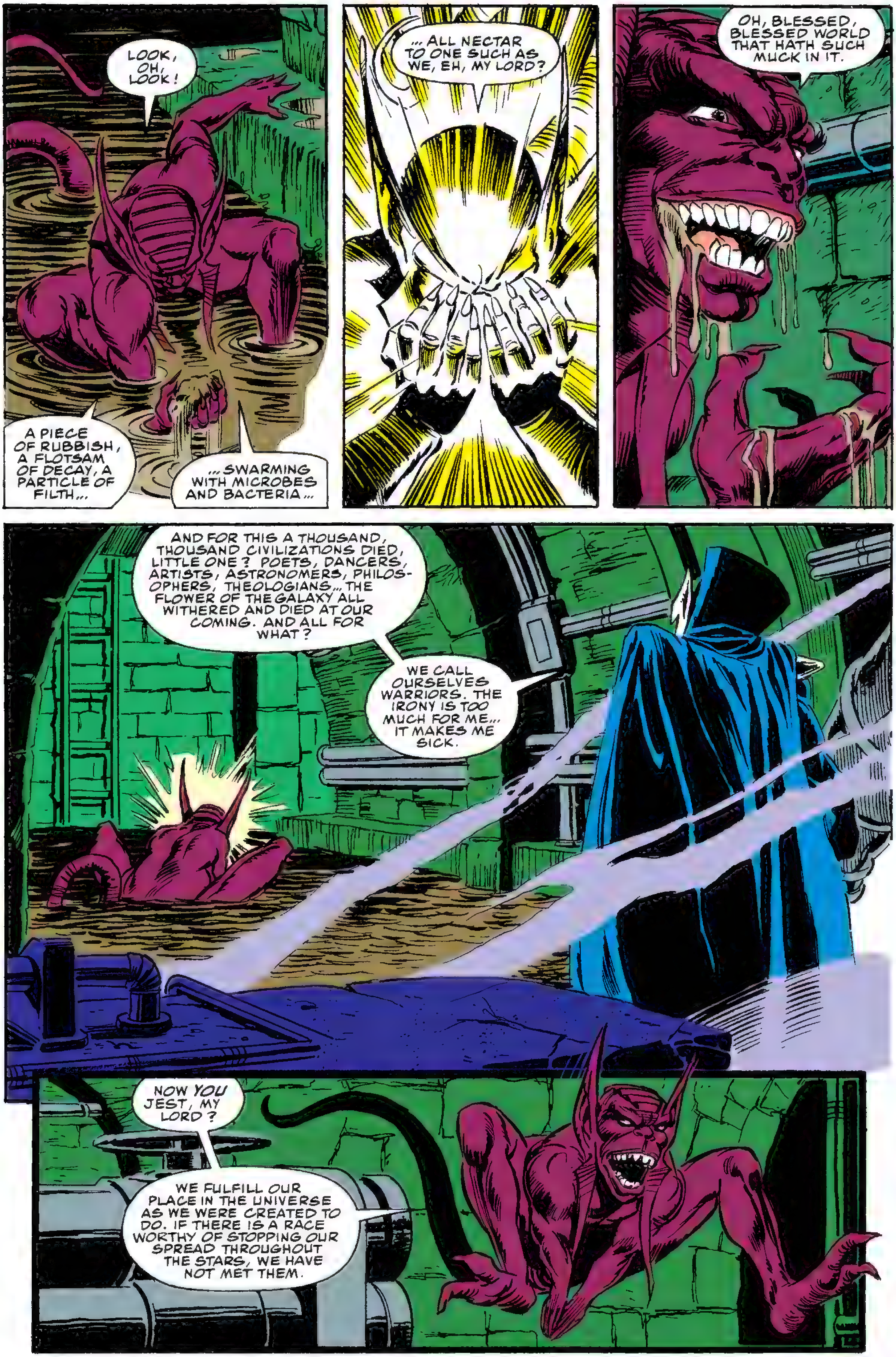

WE DO NOT TAKE ORDERS FROM ANY SAVE THANE ECTOR.
THIS BIO-SPHERE IS NOW OURS, BY RIGHT OF CONQUEST.
AND NONE MAY DENY US.
UHNNN
FS HOOOM
STEVE!
I'M... FINE, 'TASHA. LISTEN TO ME! I KNOW YOUR CAPTIVITY BY THE COLLECTOR WAS UNJUST.
HE HAD NO RIGHT TO HOLD YOU LIKE ZOO ANIMALS. EVERY RACE HAS THE SACRED RIGHT TO FREEDOM.
BUT TAKING THIS WORLD IS WRONG! WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TO FIND A SOLUTION TO YOUR PROBLEM.
FWSAMMMMM
KABLAMM
SO MUCH FOR THAT.
KEEP DOWN, NATASHA.

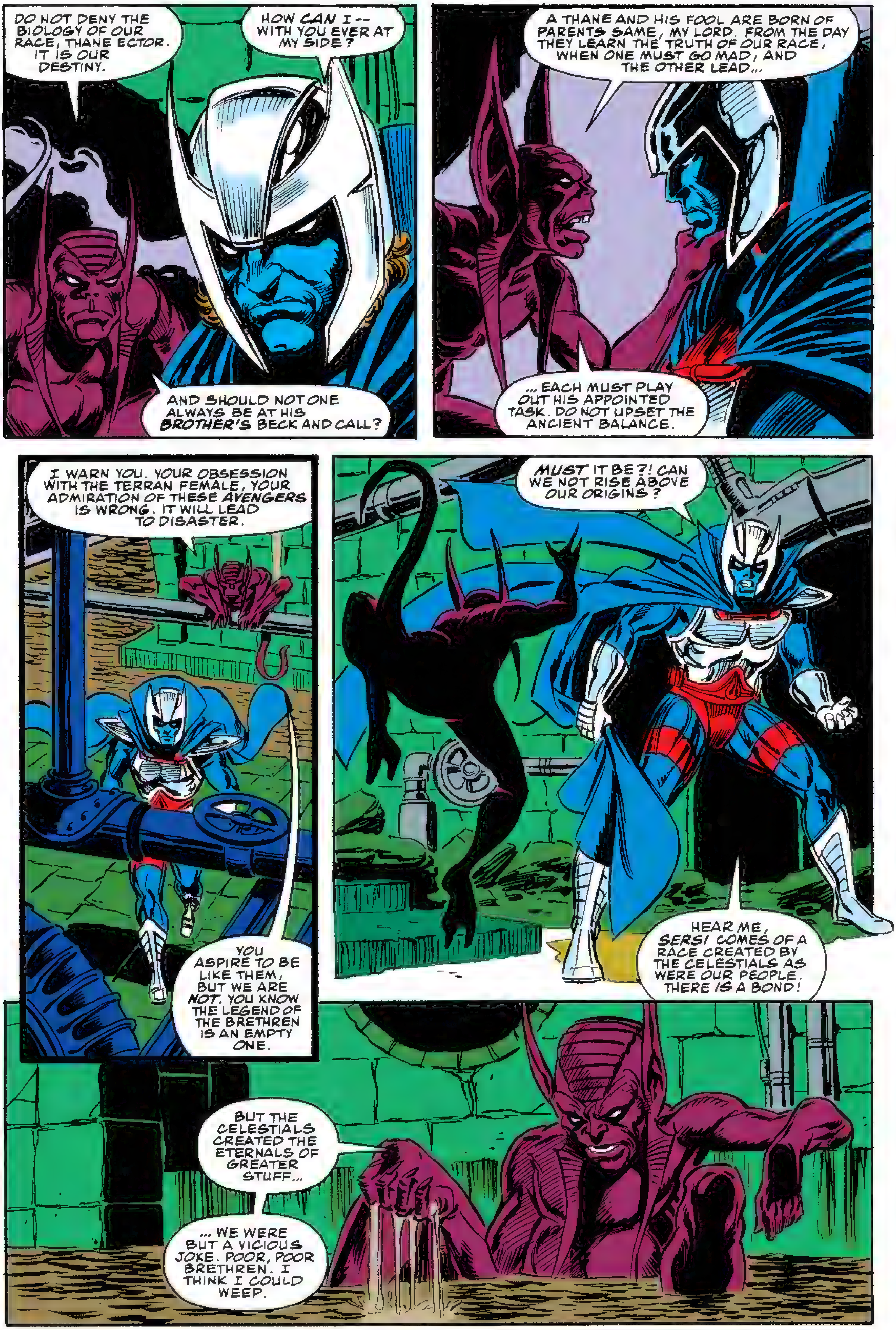

WHAT DO Y'SAY, WIDOW?
IF WE ARE TO DIE HERE, STEVE, I'D RATHER GO DOWN DEFENDING MY WORLD, THAN HIDING BEHIND YOUR SHIELD. NO DISRESPECT INTENDED, OF COURSE.
NONE TAKEN.
THEN, LET'S TAKE THEM ON LIKE AVENGERS!
THEY'RE VANISHING! BUT--THEY HAD US!
CAP, BY THE WAY THEY LOOKED, I THINK THEY WERE AS SURPRISED AS WE WERE.
AND THEY'LL BE EVEN MORE SURPRISED WHEN THEY FIND THEMSELVES APPEARING IN THE HEART OF EARTH'S CRUST.
WHO--?
IT'S CRYSTAL AND LOCKJAW OF THE INHUMANS, CAP. APPLYING FOR MEMBERSHIP.
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU COULD NEED US.
NEXT ISSUE: MUD and GLORY! THE SECRET OF THE BRETHREN BEGINS TO UNRAVEL!

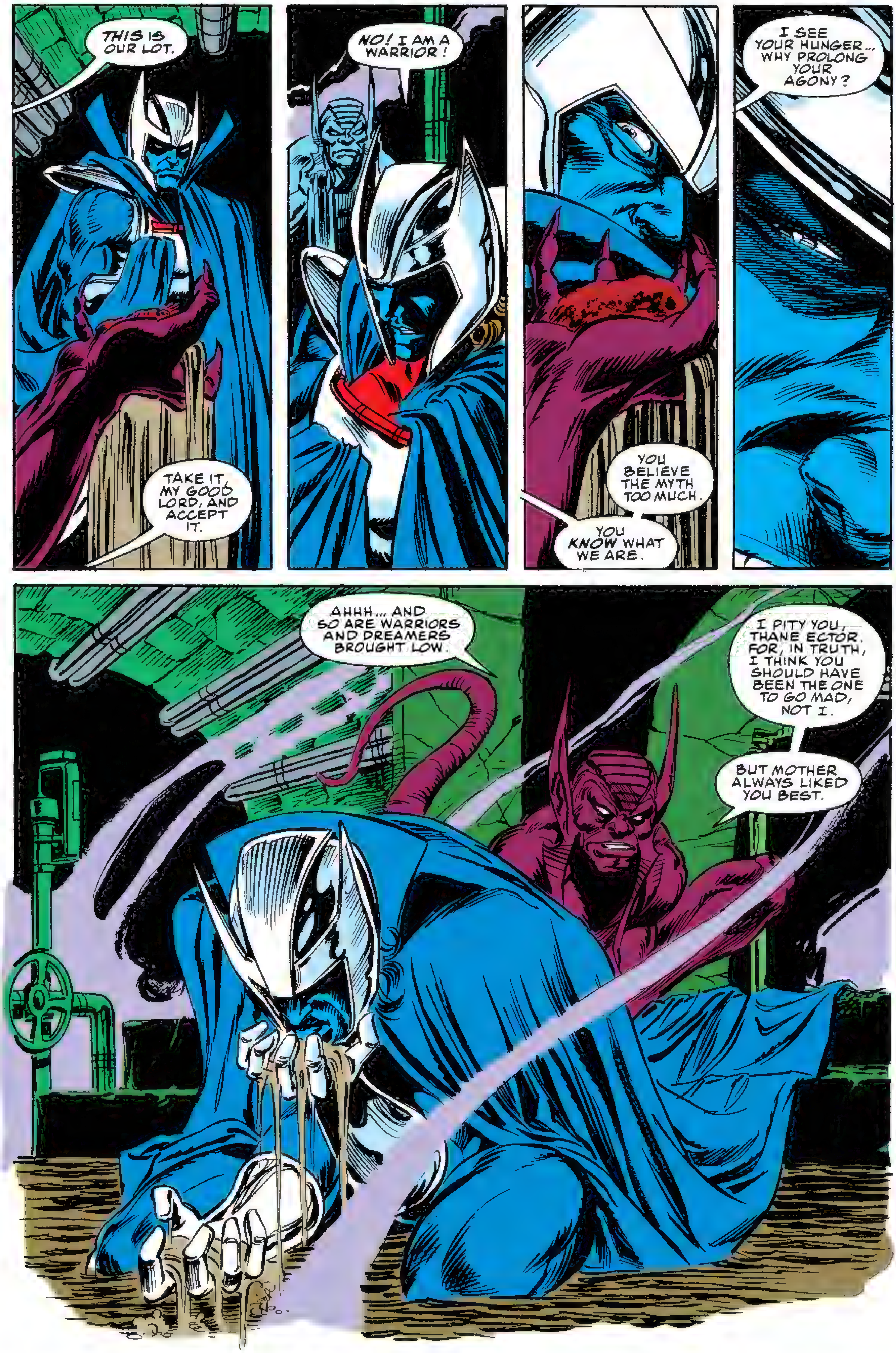
MARVEL COMICS
THE COLLECTION OBSESSION PART 4
AVENGERS
BLASTED BY THE BRETHREN
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN
337
EARLY SEPT
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
© 1991 MARVEL ENT. GROUP INC.

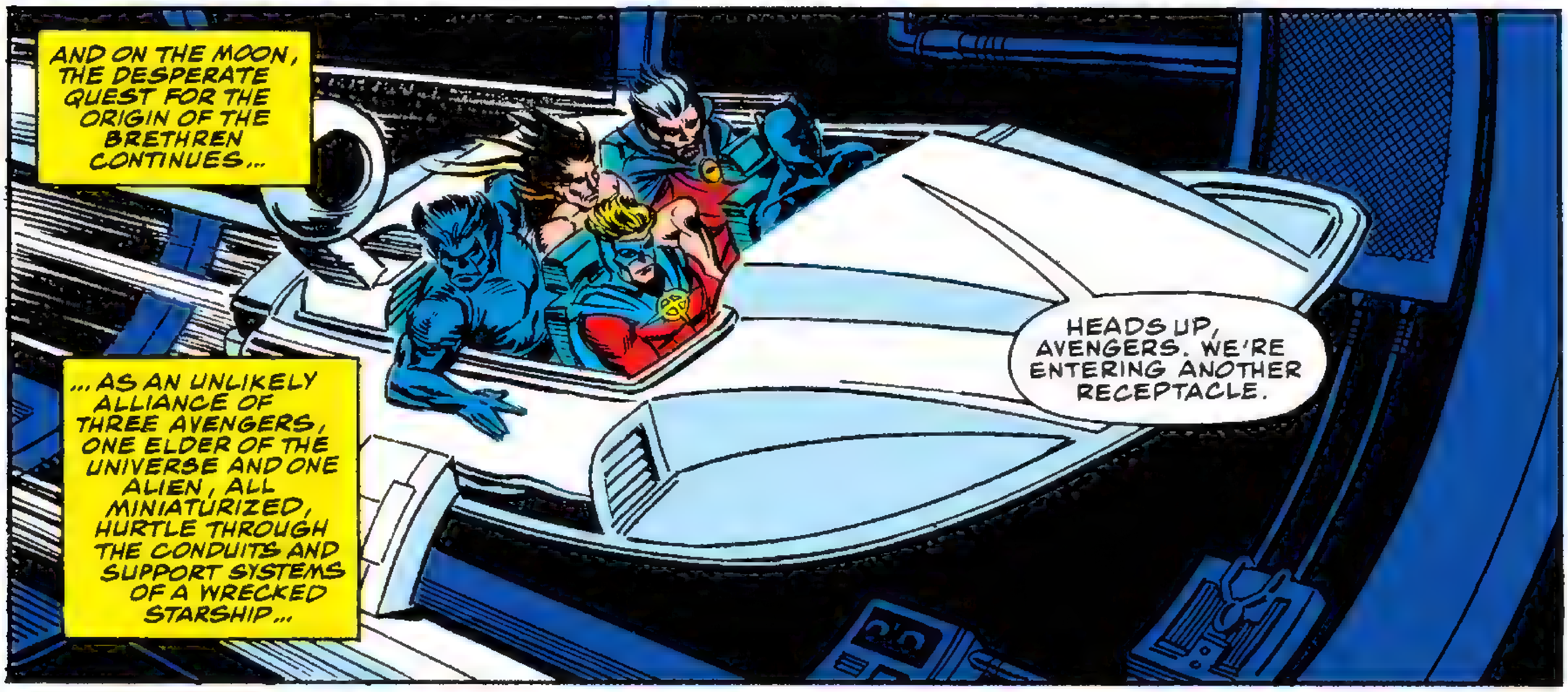
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

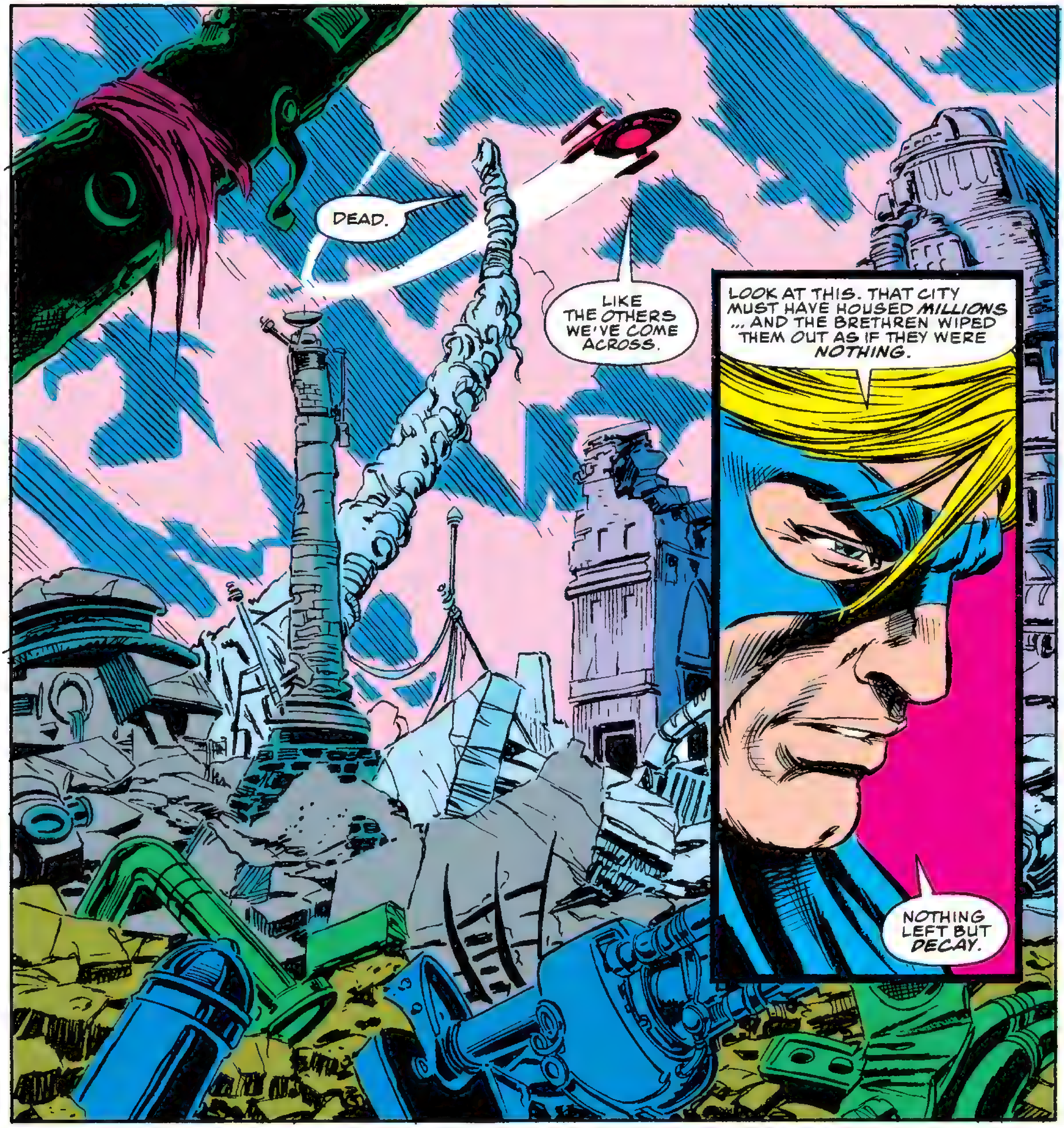

IT HAS BEEN ONE DAY SINCE THE CITADEL OF **THANE ECTOR** APPEARED ATOP THE WORLD TRADE CENTER TO HERALD HIS PEOPLE'S CONQUEST OF EARTH.
IN THAT DAY OF DESPAIR, FEARFUL EYES HAVE WITNESSED THE STRUCTURE CHANGE AND GROW...
SINUOUS TUBES HAVE EMERGED, ENTWINING THE TOWERS LIKE METALLIC VINES, SNAKING EVER DOWNWARD...
...UNTIL FINALLY THEY PLUNGE INTO THE EARTH ITSELF, PUNCTURING THE VERY PLANET THE **BRETHREN** SEEK TO MASTER.
AND DEEP BELOW, AT THE VERY BASE OF ONE OF THESE SHAFTS...
BEHOLD, MY LORD THANE!
I BELIEVE THE TERRANS CALL THIS A SEWER! WE ARE LITERALLY SURROUNDED BY MUCK AND MIRE!
CAN YOU FEEL IT, ECTOR? DOES NOT YOUR SOUL THRILL TO THE
MUD AND GLORY?
BOB HARRAS SCRIPT • STEVE EPTING PENCILS • TOM PALMER INKS
OAKLEY & PARKER, letters • R.WITTERSTAETTER, colors
RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR • TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

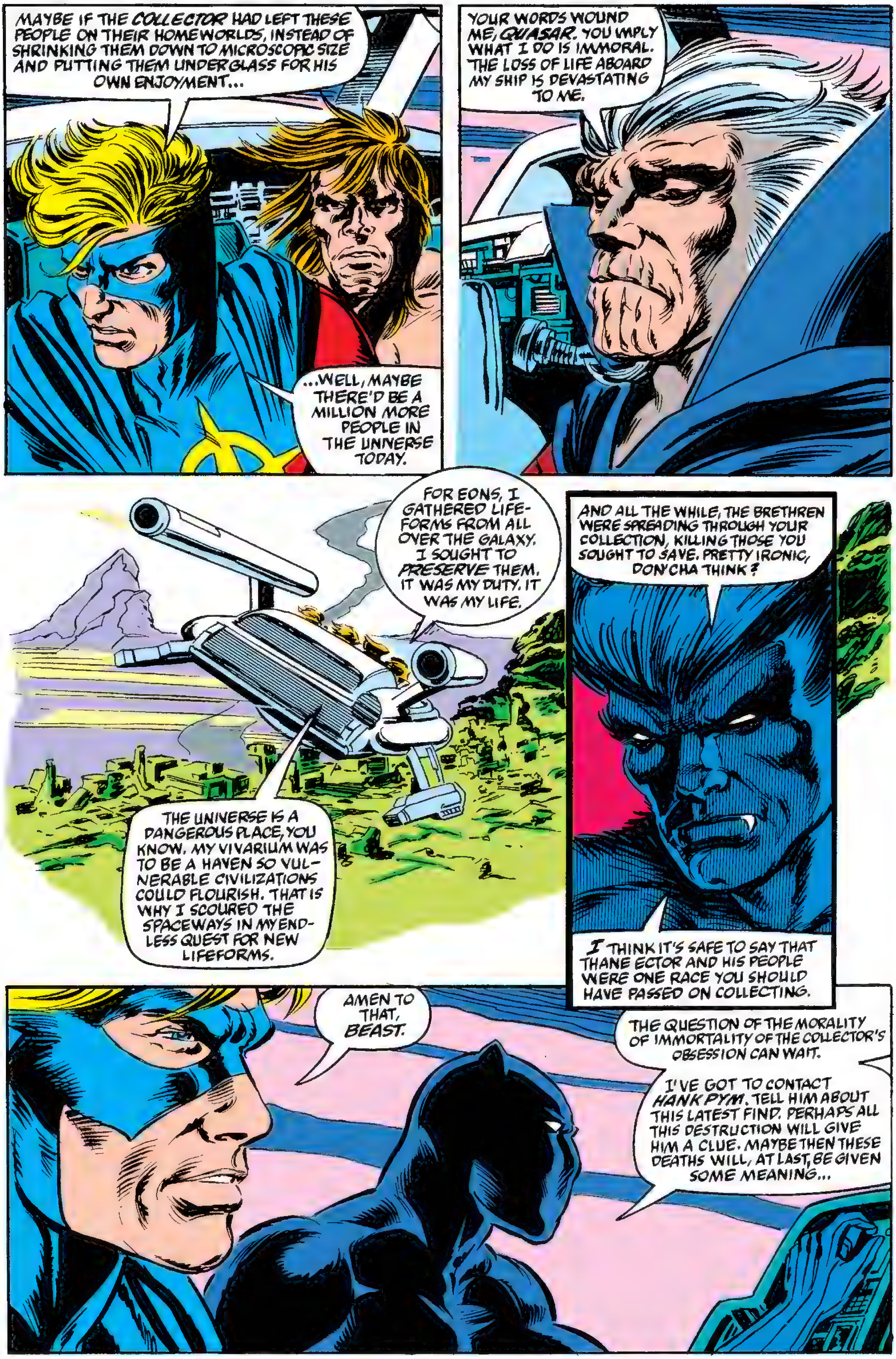

LOOK, OH, LOOK!
A PIECE OF RUBBISH, A FLOTSAM OF DECAY, A PARTICLE OF FILTH...
...SWARMING WITH MICROBES AND BACTERIA...
...ALL NECTAR TO ONE SUCH AS WE, EH, MY LORD?
OH, BLESSED, BLESSED WORLD THAT HATH SUCH MUCK IN IT.
AND FOR THIS A THOUSAND, THOUSAND CIVILIZATIONS DIED, LITTLE ONE? POETS, DANCERS, ARTISTS, ASTRONOMERS, PHILOSOPHERS, THEOLOGIANS... THE FLOWER OF THE GALAXY ALL WITHERED AND DIED AT OUR COMING. AND ALL FOR WHAT?
WE CALL OURSELVES WARRIORS. THE IRONY IS TOO MUCH FOR ME... IT MAKES ME SICK.
NOW *YOU* JEST, MY LORD?
WE FULFILL OUR PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE AS WE WERE CREATED TO DO. IF THERE IS A RACE WORTHY OF STOPPING OUR SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE STARS, WE HAVE NOT MET THEM.

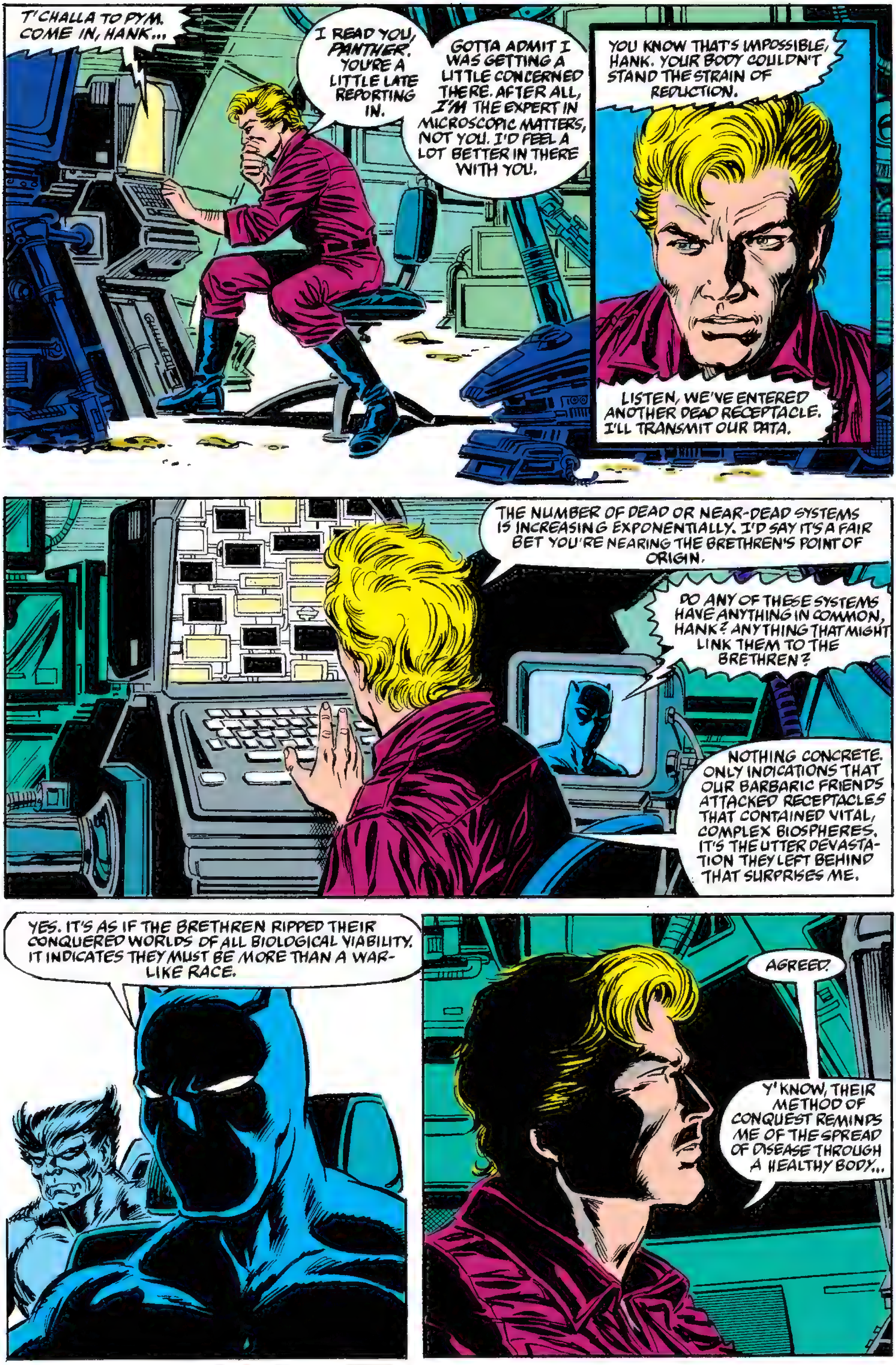

DO NOT DENY THE BIOLOGY OF OUR RACE, THANE ECTOR. IT IS OUR DESTINY.
HOW *CAN* I-- WITH YOU EVER AT MY SIDE?
AND SHOULD NOT ONE ALWAYS BE AT HIS ***BROTHER'S*** BECK AND CALL?
A THANE AND HIS FOOL ARE BORN OF PARENTS SAME, MY LORD. FROM THE DAY THEY LEARN THE TRUTH OF OUR RACE, WHEN ONE MUST *GO MAD*, AND THE OTHER LEAD...
...EACH MUST PLAY OUT HIS APPOINTED TASK. DO NOT UPSET THE ANCIENT BALANCE.
I WARN YOU. YOUR OBSESSION WITH THE TERRAN FEMALE, YOUR ADMIRATION OF THESE *AVENGERS* IS WRONG. IT WILL LEAD TO DISASTER.
YOU ASPIRE TO BE LIKE THEM, BUT WE ARE *NOT*. YOU KNOW THE LEGEND OF THE BRETHREN IS AN EMPTY ONE.
MUST IT BE?! CAN WE NOT RISE ABOVE OUR ORIGINS?
HEAR ME, *SERSI* COMES OF A RACE CREATED BY THE CELESTIALS AS WERE OUR PEOPLE. THERE *IS* A BOND!
BUT THE CELESTIALS CREATED THE ETERNALS OF GREATER STUFF...
...WE WERE BUT A VICIOUS JOKE. POOR, POOR BRETHREN. I THINK I COULD WEEP.

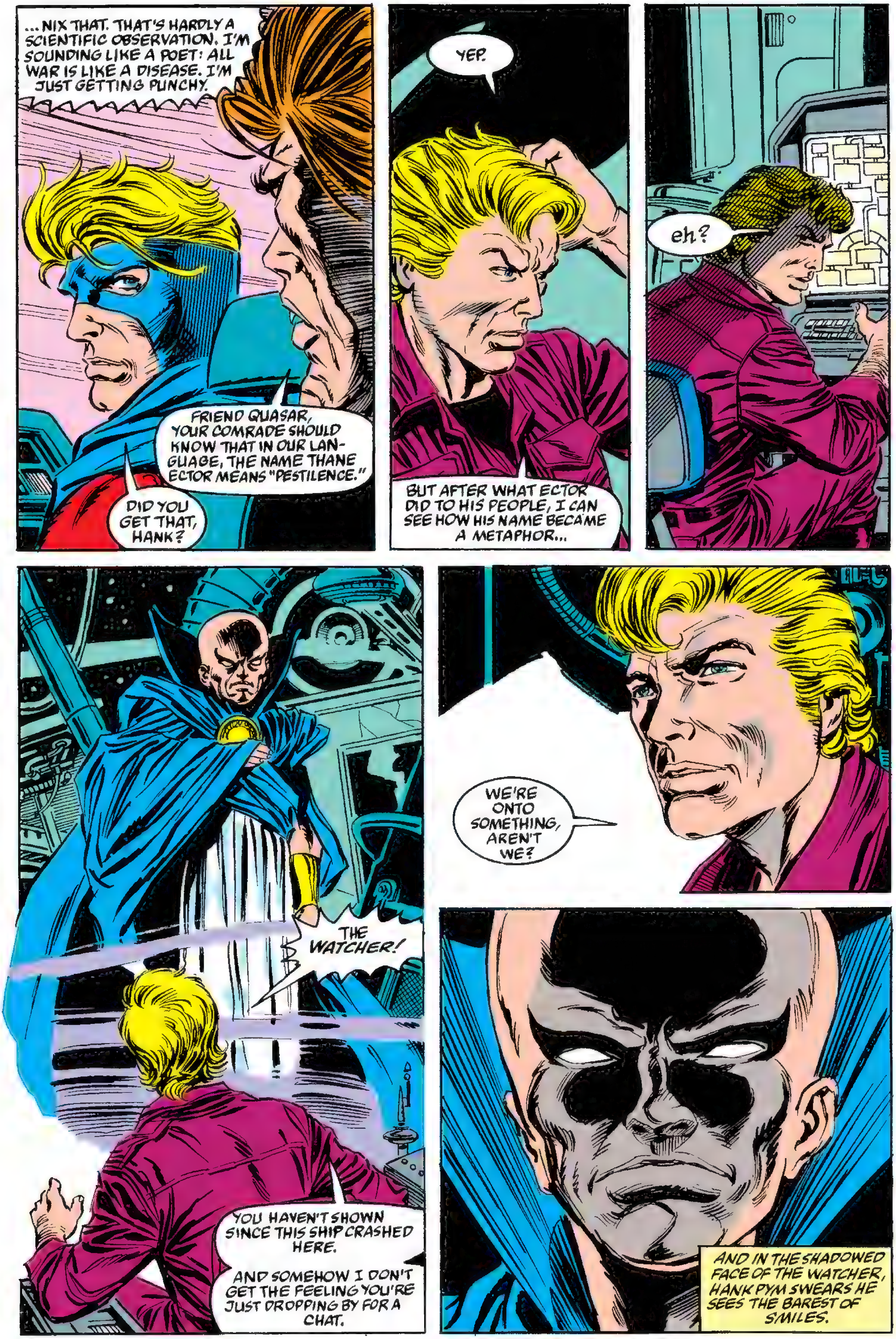

THIS IS OUR LOT.
TAKE IT, MY GOOD LORD, AND ACCEPT IT.
NO! I AM A WARRIOR!
YOU BELIEVE THE MYTH TOO MUCH.
YOU KNOW WHAT WE ARE.
I SEE YOUR HUNGER... WHY PROLONG YOUR AGONY?
AHHH... AND SO ARE WARRIORS AND DREAMERS BROUGHT LOW.
I PITY YOU, THANE ECTOR. FOR, IN TRUTH, I THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE ONE TO GO MAD, NOT I.
BUT MOTHER ALWAYS LIKED YOU BEST.

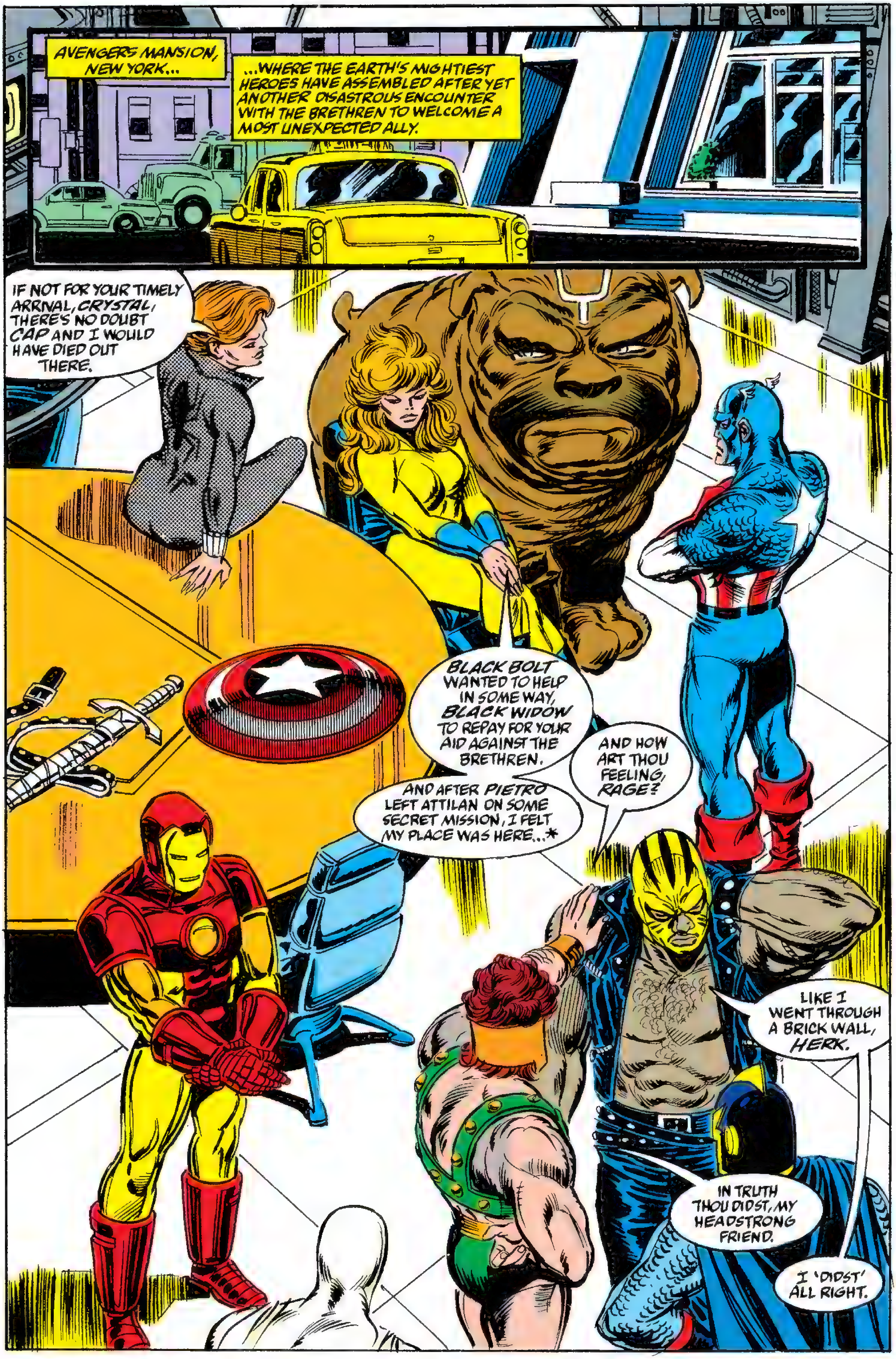

AND ON THE MOON, THE DESPERATE QUEST FOR THE ORIGIN OF THE BRETHREN CONTINUES...
...AS AN UNLIKELY ALLIANCE OF THREE AVENGERS, ONE ELDER OF THE UNIVERSE AND ONE ALIEN, ALL MINIATURIZED, HURTLE THROUGH THE CONDUITS AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS OF A WRECKED STARSHIP...
HEADS UP, AVENGERS. WE'RE ENTERING ANOTHER RECEPTACLE.

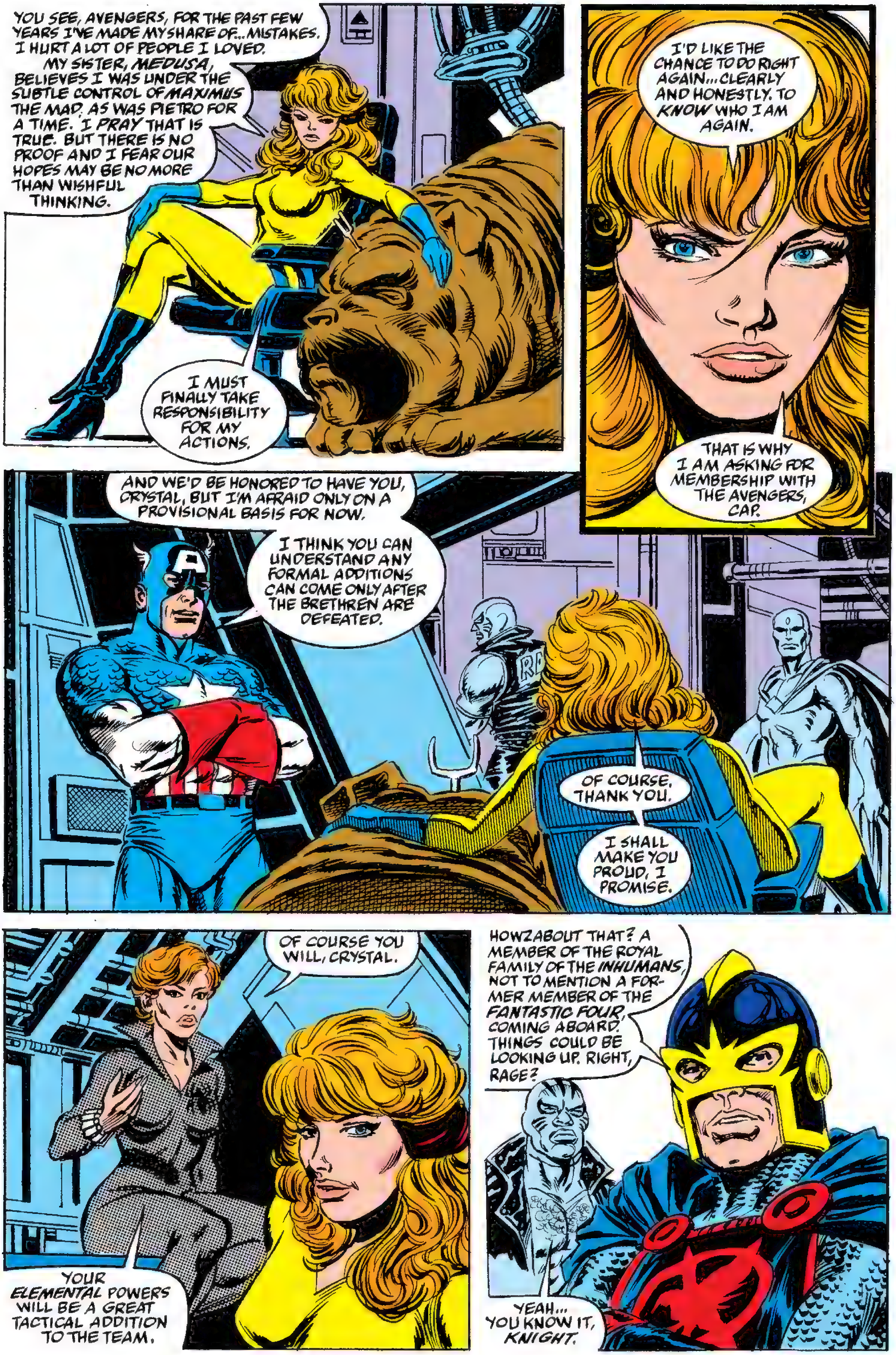

DEAD.
LIKE THE OTHERS WE'VE COME ACROSS.
LOOK AT THIS. THAT CITY MUST HAVE HOUSED MILLIONS ... AND THE BRETHREN WIPED THEM OUT AS IF THEY WERE NOTHING.
NOTHING LEFT BUT DECAY.

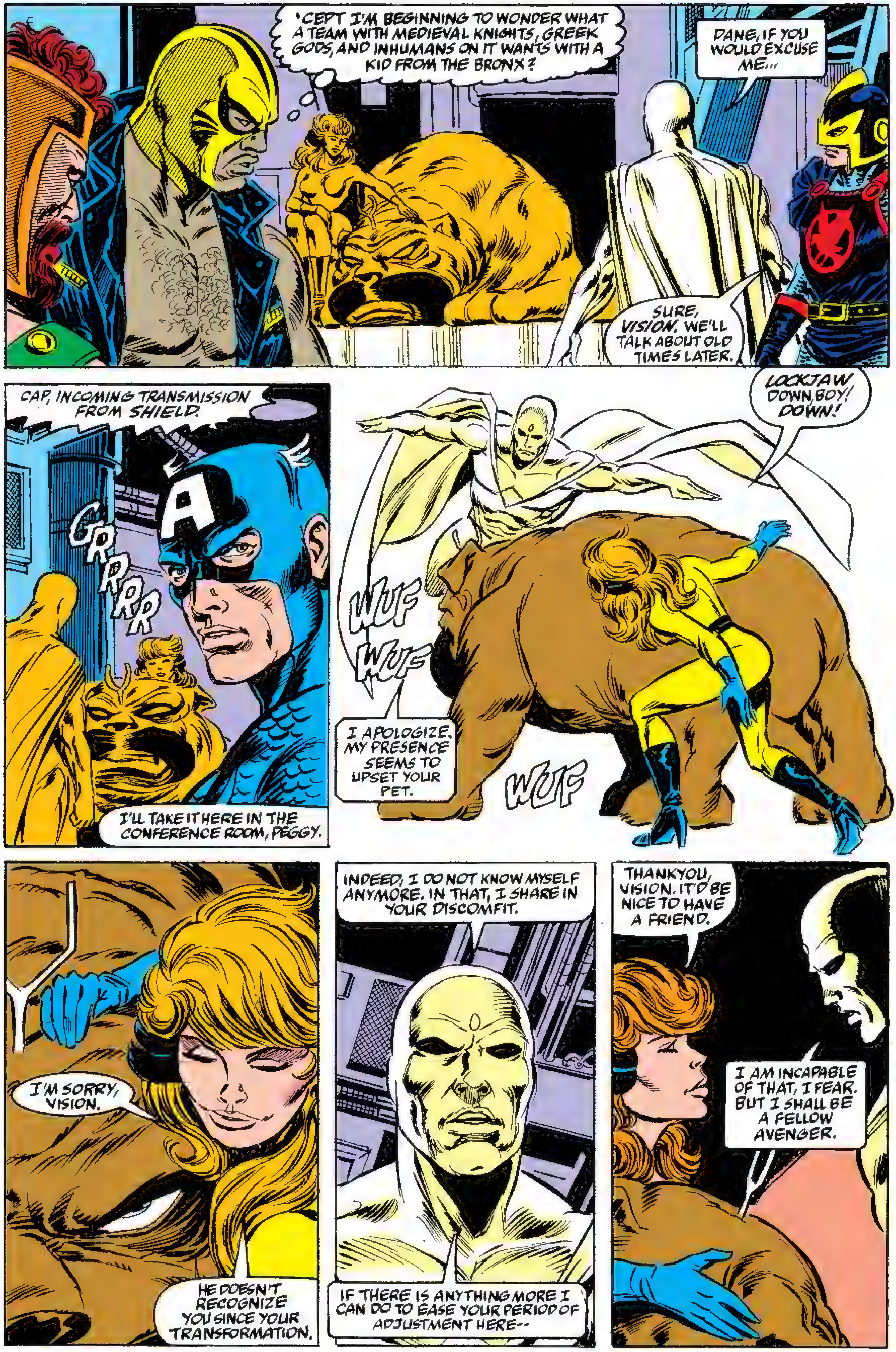

MAYBE IF THE *COLLECTOR* HAD LEFT THESE PEOPLE ON THEIR HOMEWORLDS, INSTEAD OF SHRINKING THEM DOWN TO MICROSCOPIC SIZE AND PUTTING THEM UNDER GLASS FOR HIS OWN ENJOYMENT...
...WELL, MAYBE THERE'D BE A MILLION MORE PEOPLE IN THE UNIVERSE TODAY.
YOUR WORDS WOUND ME, *QUASAR*. YOU IMPLY WHAT I DO IS IMMORAL. THE LOSS OF LIFE ABOARD MY SHIP IS DEVASTATING TO ME.
FOR EONS, I GATHERED LIFE-FORMS FROM ALL OVER THE GALAXY. I SOUGHT TO *PRESERVE* THEM. IT WAS MY DUTY. IT WAS MY LIFE.
THE UNIVERSE IS A DANGEROUS PLACE, YOU KNOW. MY VIVARIUM WAS TO BE A HAVEN SO VULNERABLE CIVILIZATIONS COULD FLOURISH. THAT IS WHY I SCOURED THE SPACEWAYS IN MY ENDLESS QUEST FOR NEW LIFEFORMS.
AND ALL THE WHILE, THE BRETHREN WERE SPREADING THROUGH YOUR COLLECTION, KILLING THOSE YOU SOUGHT TO SAVE. PRETTY IRONIC, DON'CHA THINK?
I THINK IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT THANE ECTOR AND HIS PEOPLE WERE ONE RACE YOU SHOULD HAVE PASSED ON COLLECTING.
AMEN TO THAT, *BEAST*.
THE QUESTION OF THE MORALITY OF IMMORTALITY OF THE COLLECTOR'S OBSESSION CAN WAIT.
I'VE GOT TO CONTACT *HANK PYM*. TELL HIM ABOUT THIS LATEST FIND. PERHAPS ALL THIS DESTRUCTION WILL GIVE HIM A CLUE. MAYBE THEN THESE DEATHS WILL, AT LAST, BE GIVEN SOME MEANING...

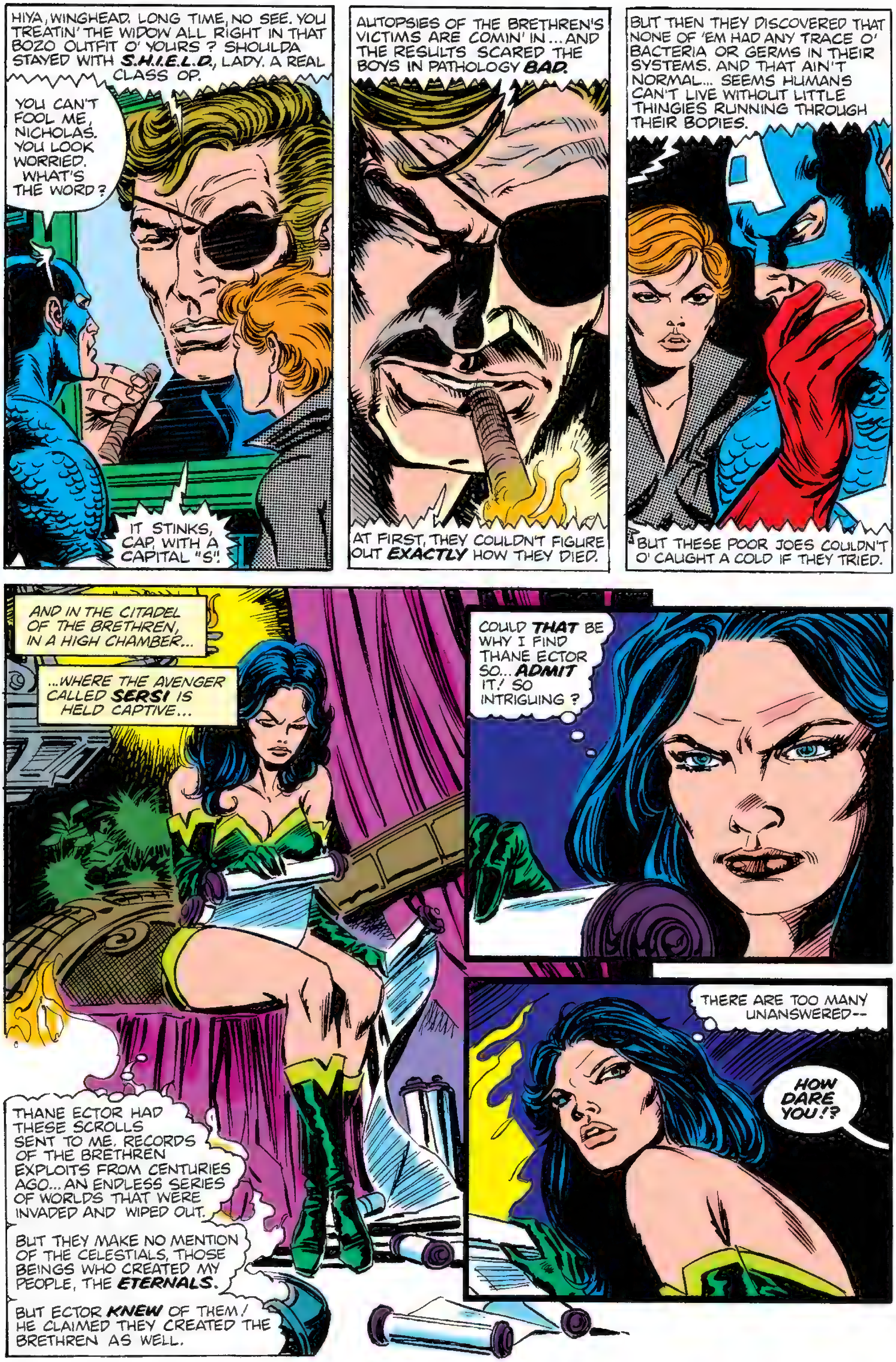

T'CHALLA TO PYM. COME IN, HANK...
I READ YOU, *PANTHER*. YOU'RE A LITTLE LATE REPORTING IN.
GOTTA ADMIT I WAS GETTING A LITTLE CONCERNED THERE. AFTER ALL, *I'M* THE EXPERT IN MICROSCOPIC MATTERS, NOT YOU. I'D FEEL A LOT BETTER IN THERE WITH YOU.
YOU KNOW THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, HANK. YOUR BODY COULDN'T STAND THE STRAIN OF REDUCTION.
LISTEN, WE'VE ENTERED ANOTHER DEAD RECEPTACLE. I'LL TRANSMIT OUR DATA.
THE NUMBER OF DEAD OR NEAR-DEAD SYSTEMS IS INCREASING EXPONENTIALLY. I'D SAY IT'S A FAIR BET YOU'RE NEARING THE BRETHREN'S POINT OF ORIGIN.
DO ANY OF THESE SYSTEMS HAVE ANYTHING IN COMMON, HANK? ANYTHING THAT MIGHT LINK THEM TO THE BRETHREN?
NOTHING CONCRETE. ONLY INDICATIONS THAT OUR BARBARIC FRIENDS ATTACKED RECEPTACLES THAT CONTAINED VITAL, COMPLEX BIOSPHERES. IT'S THE UTTER DEVASTATION THEY LEFT BEHIND THAT SURPRISES ME.
YES. IT'S AS IF THE BRETHREN RIPPED THEIR CONQUERED WORLDS OF ALL BIOLOGICAL VIABILITY. IT INDICATES THEY MUST BE MORE THAN A WAR-LIKE RACE.
AGREED.
Y'KNOW, THEIR METHOD OF CONQUEST REMINDS ME OF THE SPREAD OF DISEASE THROUGH A HEALTHY BODY...

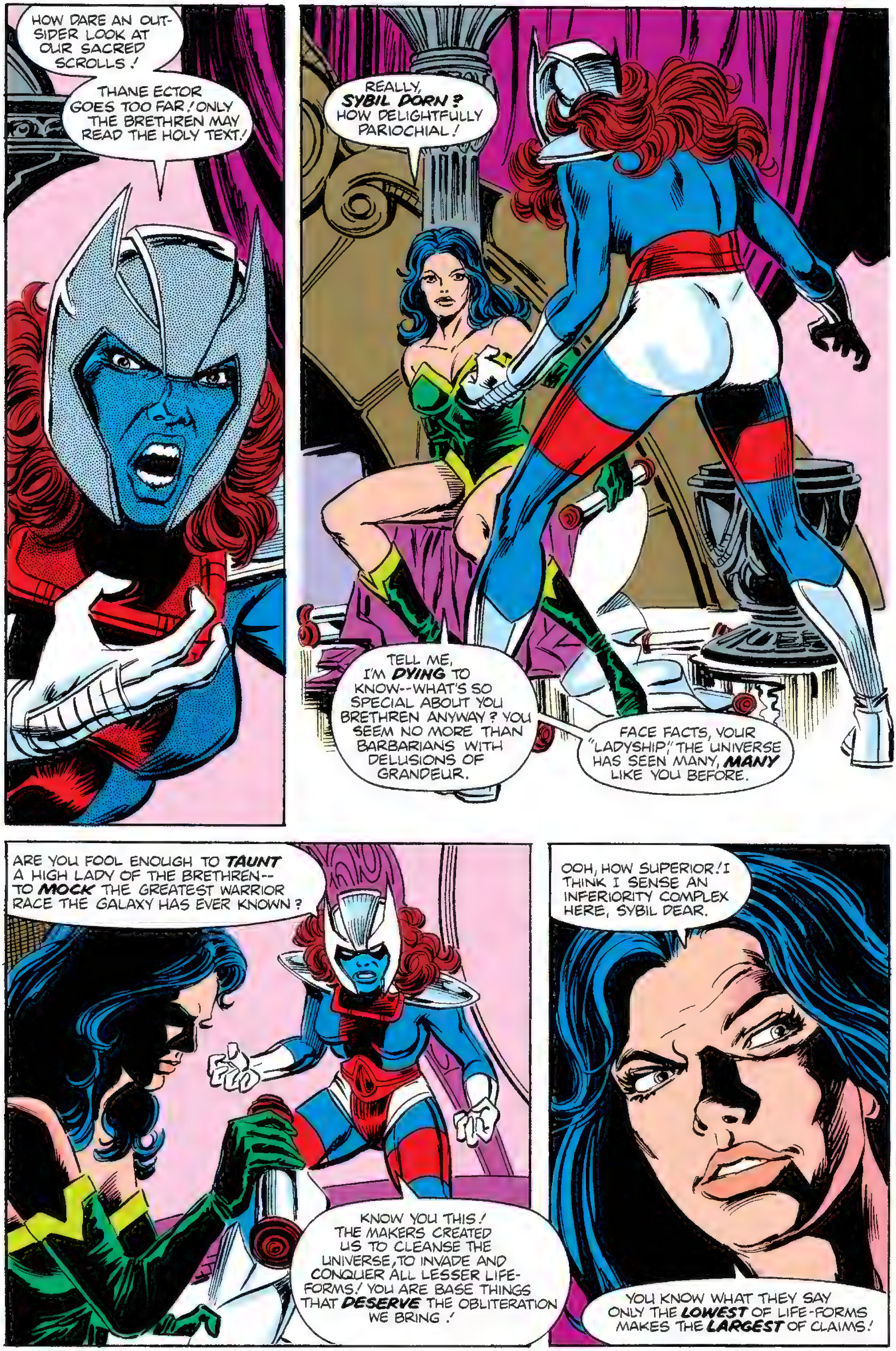

...NIX THAT. THAT'S HARDLY A SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATION. I'M SOUNDING LIKE A POET: ALL WAR IS LIKE A DISEASE. I'M JUST GETTING PUNCHY.
FRIEND QUASAR, YOUR COMRADE SHOULD KNOW THAT IN OUR LANGUAGE, THE NAME THANE ECTOR MEANS "PESTILENCE."
DID YOU GET THAT, HANK?
YEP.
BUT AFTER WHAT ECTOR DID TO HIS PEOPLE, I CAN SEE HOW HIS NAME BECAME A METAPHOR...
eh?
THE WATCHER!
YOU HAVEN'T SHOWN SINCE THIS SHIP CRASHED HERE.
AND SOMEHOW I DON'T GET THE FEELING YOU'RE JUST DROPPING BY FOR A CHAT.
WE'RE ONTO SOMETHING, AREN'T WE?
AND IN THE SHADOWED FACE OF THE WATCHER, HANK PYM SWEARS HE SEES THE BAREST OF SMILES.

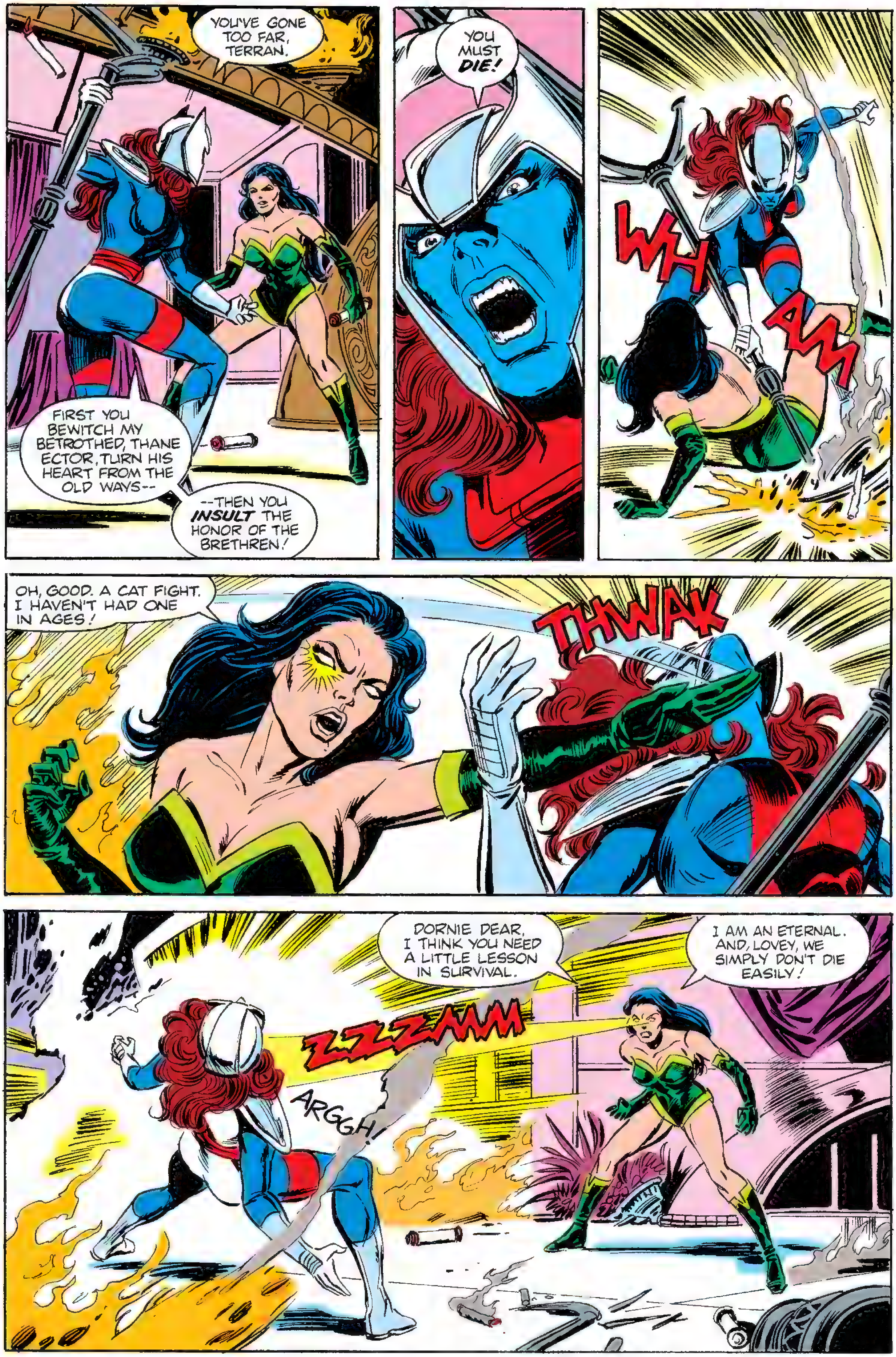

AVENGERS MANSION, NEW YORK...
...WHERE THE EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE ASSEMBLED AFTER YET ANOTHER DISASTROUS ENCOUNTER WITH THE BRETHREN TO WELCOME A MOST UNEXPECTED ALLY.
IF NOT FOR YOUR TIMELY ARRIVAL, CRYSTAL, THERE'S NO DOUBT CAP AND I WOULD HAVE DIED OUT THERE.
BLACK BOLT WANTED TO HELP IN SOME WAY, BLACK WIDOW TO REPAY FOR YOUR AID AGAINST THE BRETHREN.
AND AFTER PIETRO LEFT ATTILAN ON SOME SECRET MISSION, I FELT MY PLACE WAS HERE...*
AND HOW ART THOU FEELING, RAGE?
LIKE I WENT THROUGH A BRICK WALL, HERK.
IN TRUTH THOU DIDST, MY HEADSTRONG FRIEND.
I 'DIDST' ALL RIGHT.

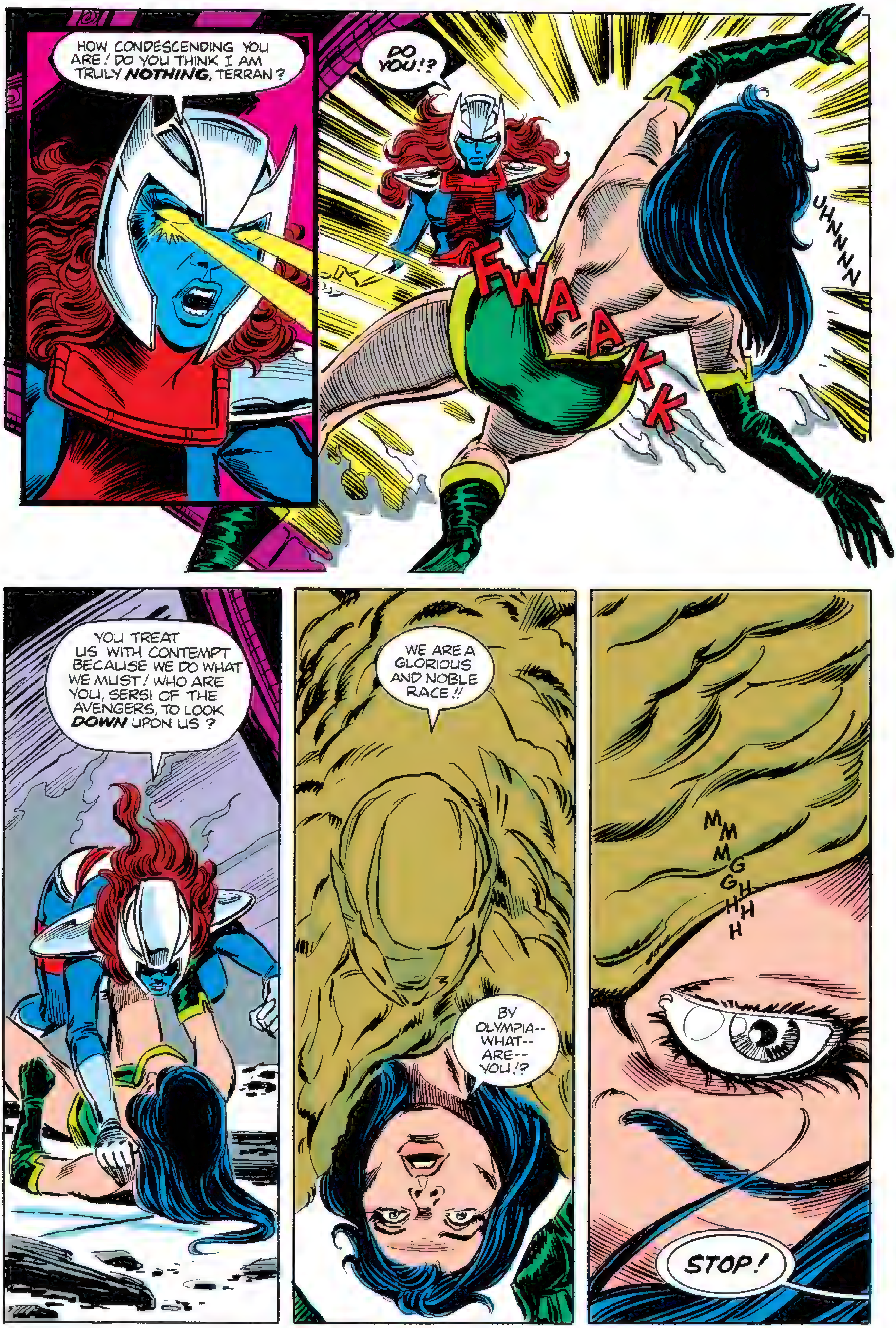

YOU SEE, AVENGERS, FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS I'VE MADE MY SHARE OF... MISTAKES. I HURT A LOT OF PEOPLE I LOVED. MY SISTER, *MEDUSA*, BELIEVES I WAS UNDER THE SUBTLE CONTROL OF *MAXIMUS* THE MAD, AS WAS PIETRO FOR A TIME. I *PRAY* THAT IS TRUE. BUT THERE IS NO PROOF AND I FEAR OUR HOPES MAY BE NO MORE THAN WISHFUL THINKING.
I MUST FINALLY TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS.
I'D LIKE THE CHANCE TO DO RIGHT AGAIN... CLEARLY AND HONESTLY. TO *KNOW* WHO I AM AGAIN.
THAT IS WHY I AM ASKING FOR MEMBERSHIP WITH THE AVENGERS, CAP.
AND WE'D BE HONORED TO HAVE YOU, CRYSTAL, BUT I'M AFRAID ONLY ON A PROVISIONAL BASIS FOR NOW.
I THINK YOU CAN UNDERSTAND ANY FORMAL ADDITIONS CAN COME ONLY AFTER THE BRETHREN ARE DEFEATED.
OF COURSE. THANK YOU.
I SHALL MAKE YOU PROUD, I PROMISE.
OF COURSE YOU WILL, CRYSTAL.
YOUR *ELEMENTAL* POWERS WILL BE A GREAT TACTICAL ADDITION TO THE TEAM.
HOWZABOUT THAT? A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY OF THE *INHUMANS*, NOT TO MENTION A FORMER MEMBER OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR*, COMING ABOARD. THINGS COULD BE LOOKING UP. RIGHT, RAGE?
YEAH... YOU KNOW IT, *KNIGHT*.


'CEPT I'M BEGINNING TO WONDER WHAT A TEAM WITH MEDIEVAL KNIGHTS, GREEK GODS, AND INHUMANS ON IT WANTS WITH A KID FROM THE BRONX?
DANE, IF YOU WOULD EXCUSE ME...
SURE, VISION. WE'LL TALK ABOUT OLD TIMES LATER.
CAP, INCOMING TRANSMISSION FROM SHIELD.
GRRRRR
I'LL TAKE IT HERE IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, PEGGY.
LOCKJAW, DOWN, BOY! DOWN!
WUF
WUF
I APOLOGIZE. MY PRESENCE SEEMS TO UPSET YOUR PET.
WUF
I'M SORRY, VISION.
HE DOESN'T RECOGNIZE YOU SINCE YOUR TRANSFORMATION.
INDEED, I DO NOT KNOW MYSELF ANYMORE. IN THAT, I SHARE IN YOUR DISCOMFIT.
IF THERE IS ANYTHING MORE I CAN DO TO EASE YOUR PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT HERE--
THANK YOU, VISION. IT'D BE NICE TO HAVE A FRIEND.
I AM INCAPABLE OF THAT, I FEAR. BUT I SHALL BE A FELLOW AVENGER.

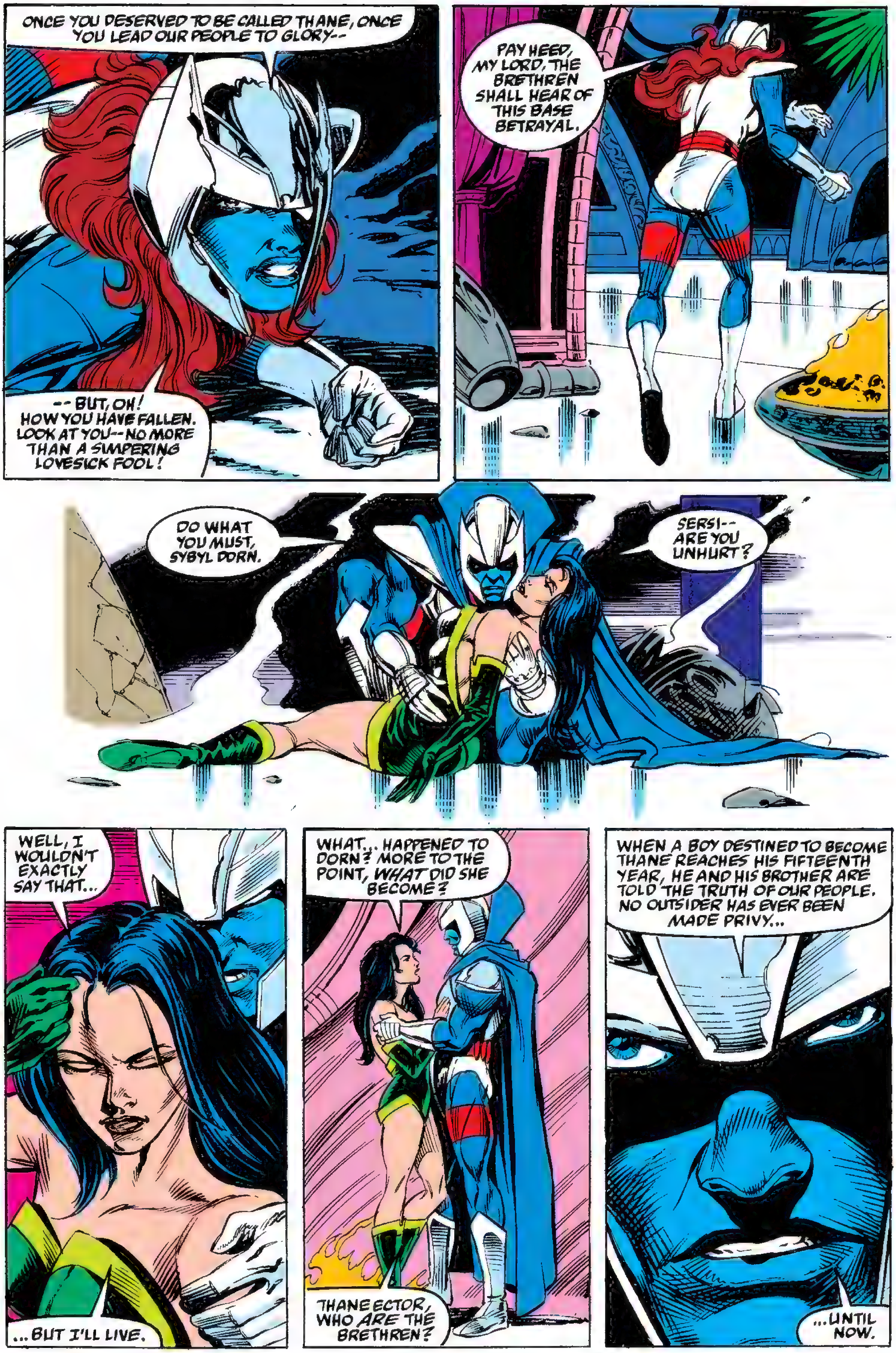

HIYA, WINGHEAD. LONG TIME, NO SEE. YOU TREATIN' THE WIDOW ALL RIGHT IN THAT BOZO OUTFIT O' YOURS? SHOULDA STAYED WITH **S.H.I.E.L.D.**, LADY. A REAL CLASS OP.
YOU CAN'T FOOL ME, NICHOLAS. YOU LOOK WORRIED. WHAT'S THE WORD?
IT STINKS, CAP, WITH A CAPITAL "S".
AUTOPSIES OF THE BRETHREN'S VICTIMS ARE COMIN' IN... AND THE RESULTS SCARED THE BOYS IN PATHOLOGY **BAD**.
AT FIRST, THEY COULDN'T FIGURE OUT **EXACTLY** HOW THEY DIED.
BUT THEN THEY DISCOVERED THAT NONE OF 'EM HAD ANY TRACE O' BACTERIA OR GERMS IN THEIR SYSTEMS. AND THAT AIN'T NORMAL... SEEMS HUMANS CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT LITTLE THINGIES RUNNING THROUGH THEIR BODIES.
BUT THESE POOR JOES COULDN'T O' CAUGHT A COLD IF THEY TRIED.
AND IN THE CITADEL OF THE BRETHREN, IN A HIGH CHAMBER...
*...WHERE THE AVENGER CALLED **SERSI** IS HELD CAPTIVE...*
THANE ECTOR HAD THESE SCROLLS SENT TO ME. RECORDS OF THE BRETHREN EXPLOITS FROM CENTURIES AGO... AN ENDLESS SERIES OF WORLDS THAT WERE INVADED AND WIPED OUT.
BUT THEY MAKE NO MENTION OF THE CELESTIALS, THOSE BEINGS WHO CREATED MY PEOPLE, THE **ETERNALS**.
BUT ECTOR **KNEW** OF THEM! HE CLAIMED THEY CREATED THE BRETHREN AS WELL.
COULD **THAT** BE WHY I FIND THANE ECTOR SO... **ADMIT** IT! SO INTRIGUING?
THERE ARE TOO MANY UNANSWERED--
HOW DARE YOU!?

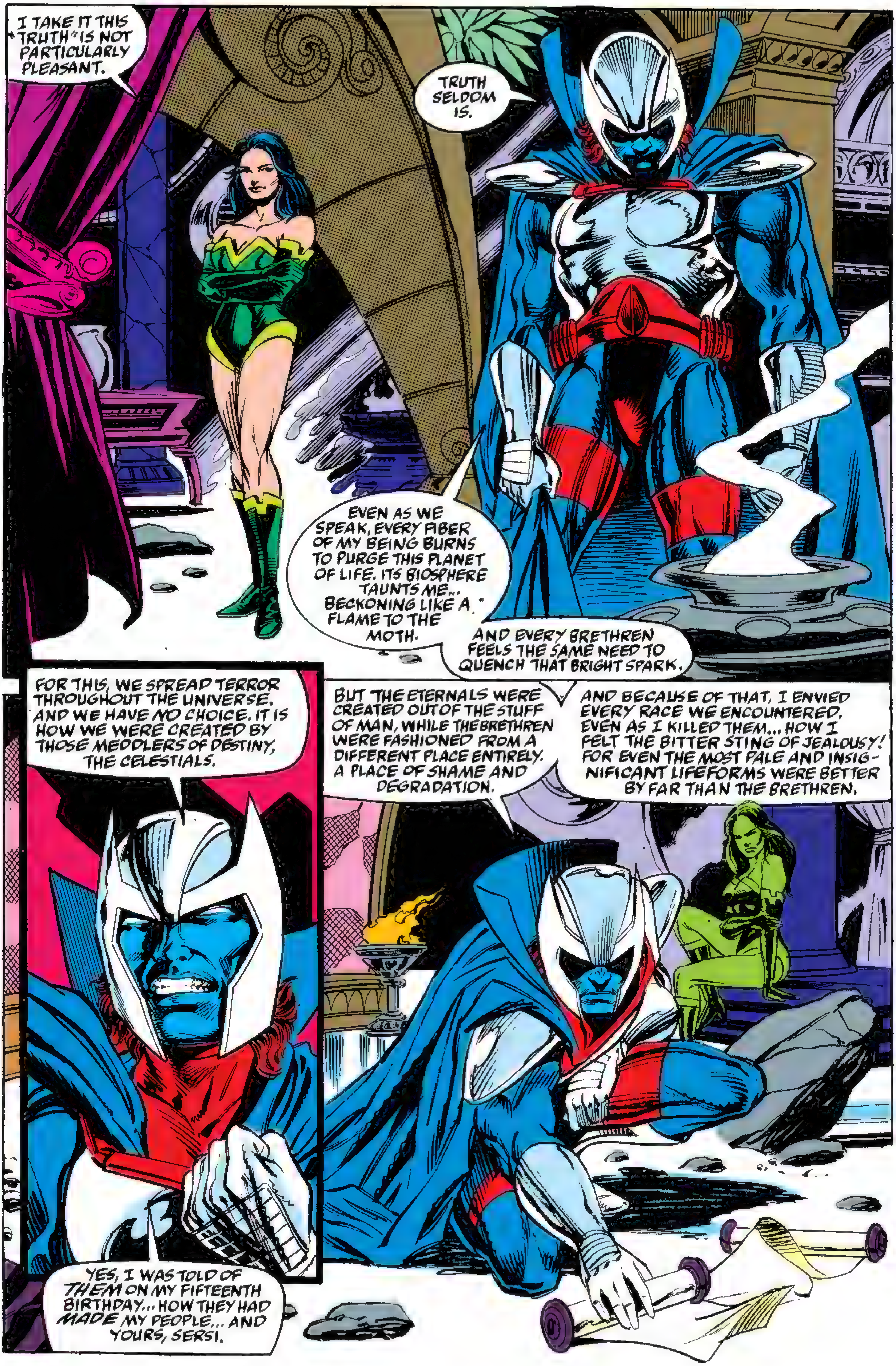

HOW DARE AN OUTSIDER LOOK AT OUR SACRED SCROLLS!
THANE ECTOR GOES TOO FAR! ONLY THE BRETHREN MAY READ THE HOLY TEXT!
REALLY, **SYBIL DORN?** HOW DELIGHTFULLY PARIOCHIAL!
TELL ME, I'M **DYING** TO KNOW--WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT YOU BRETHREN ANYWAY? YOU SEEM NO MORE THAN BARBARIANS WITH DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR.
FACE FACTS, YOUR "LADYSHIP," THE UNIVERSE HAS SEEN MANY, **MANY** LIKE YOU BEFORE.
ARE YOU FOOL ENOUGH TO **TAUNT** A HIGH LADY OF THE BRETHREN-- TO **MOCK** THE GREATEST WARRIOR RACE THE GALAXY HAS EVER KNOWN?
KNOW YOU THIS! THE MAKERS CREATED US TO CLEANSE THE UNIVERSE, TO INVADE AND CONQUER ALL LESSER LIFE-FORMS! YOU ARE BASE THINGS THAT **DESERVE** THE OBLITERATION WE BRING!
OOH, HOW SUPERIOR! I THINK I SENSE AN INFERIORITY COMPLEX HERE, SYBIL DEAR.
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ONLY THE **LOWEST** OF LIFE-FORMS MAKES THE **LARGEST** OF CLAIMS!

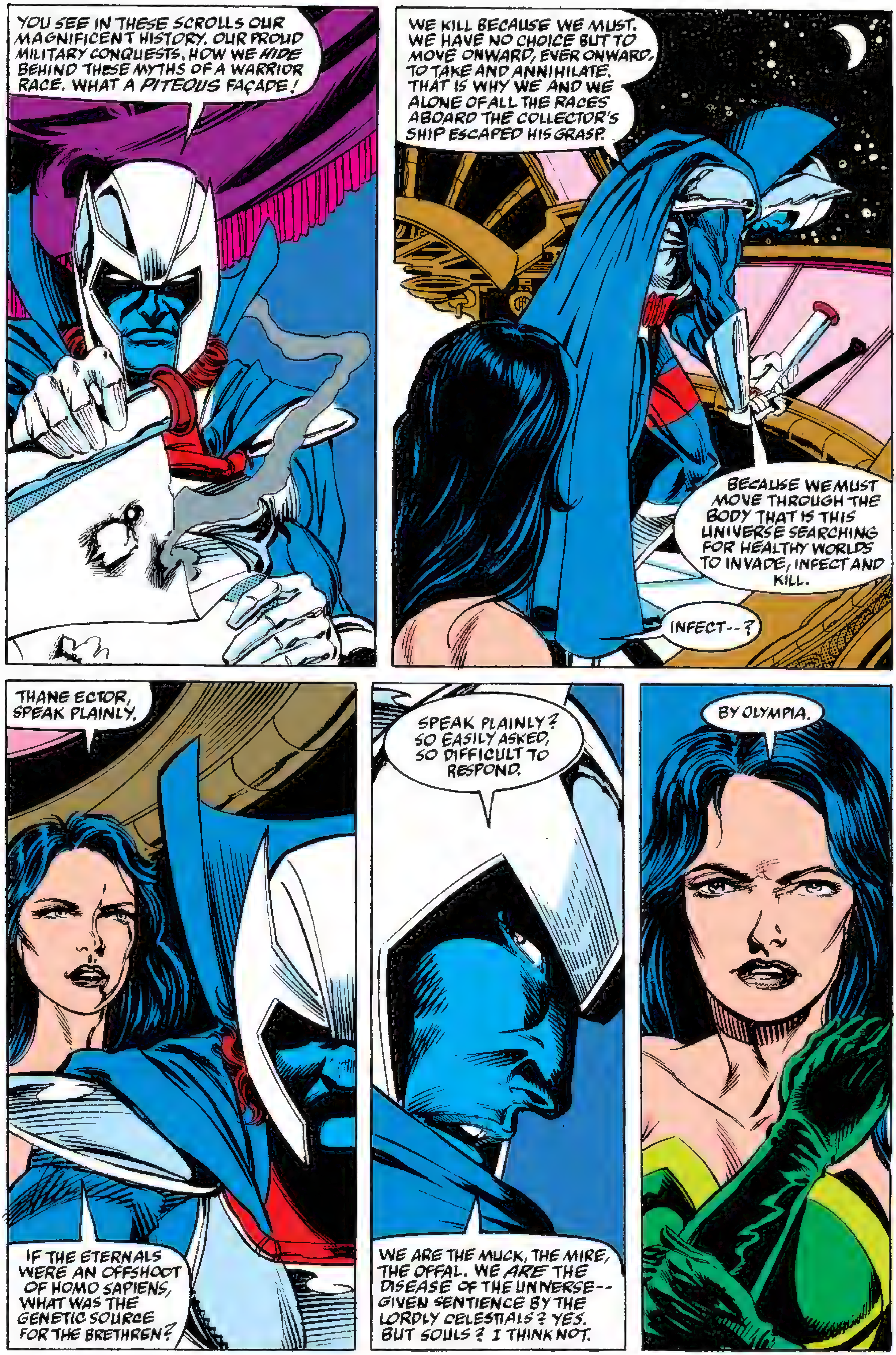

YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR, TERRAN.
FIRST YOU BEWITCH MY BETROTHED, THANE ECTOR, TURN HIS HEART FROM THE OLD WAYS--
--THEN YOU INSULT THE HONOR OF THE BRETHREN!
YOU MUST DIE!
WHAM
OH, GOOD. A CAT FIGHT. I HAVEN'T HAD ONE IN AGES!
THWAK
DORNIE DEAR, I THINK YOU NEED A LITTLE LESSON IN SURVIVAL.
I AM AN ETERNAL. AND, LOVEY, WE SIMPLY DON'T DIE EASILY!
ZZZAMM
ARGGH!

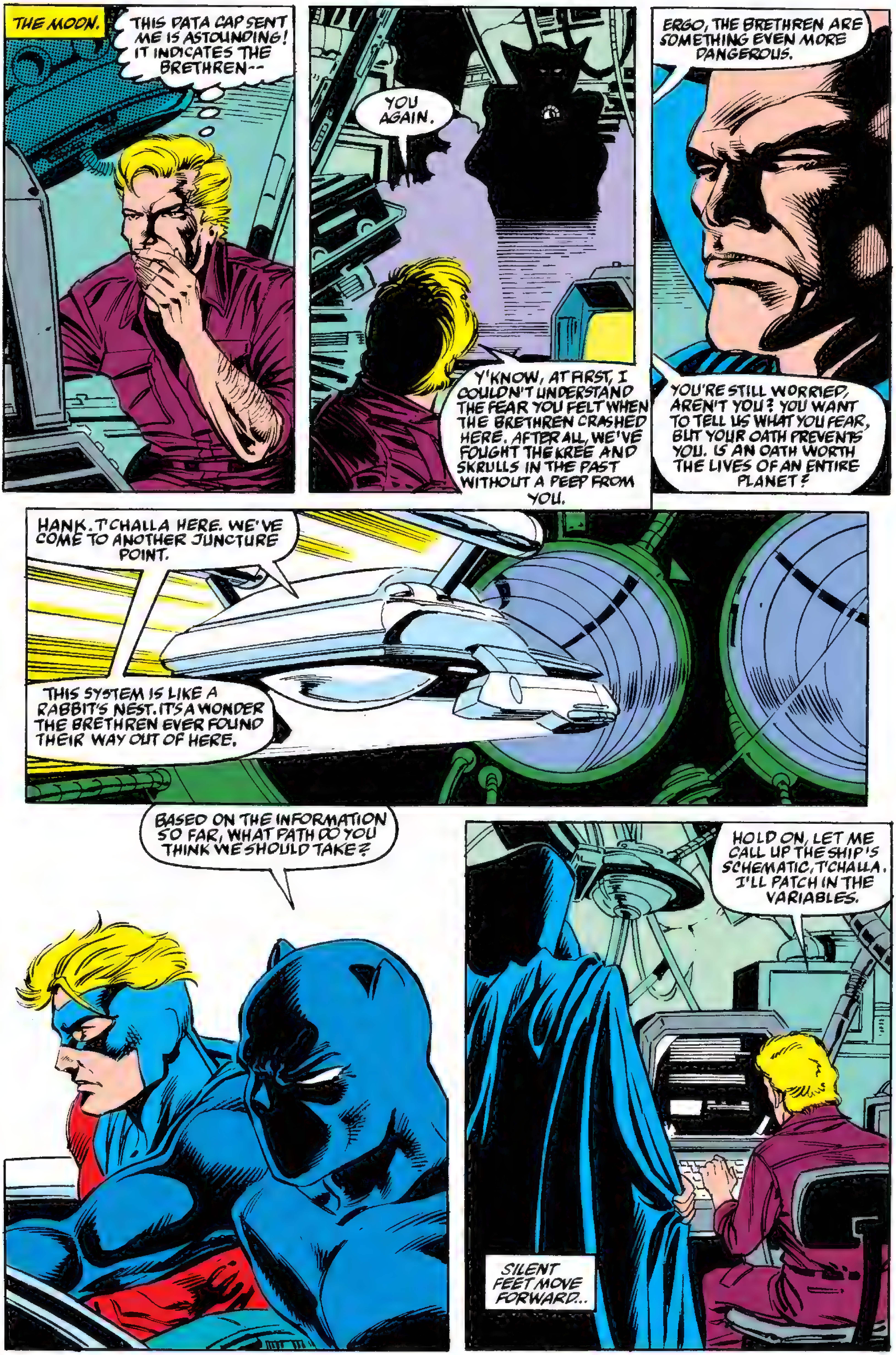

HOW CONDESCENDING YOU ARE! DO YOU THINK I AM TRULY **NOTHING**, TERRAN?
DO YOU!?
FWAAKK
UHNNNN
YOU TREAT US WITH CONTEMPT BECAUSE WE DO WHAT WE MUST! WHO ARE YOU, SERSI OF THE AVENGERS, TO LOOK **DOWN** UPON US?
WE ARE A GLORIOUS AND NOBLE RACE!!
BY OLYMPIA-- WHAT-- ARE-- YOU!?
MMMGGHHHH
STOP!

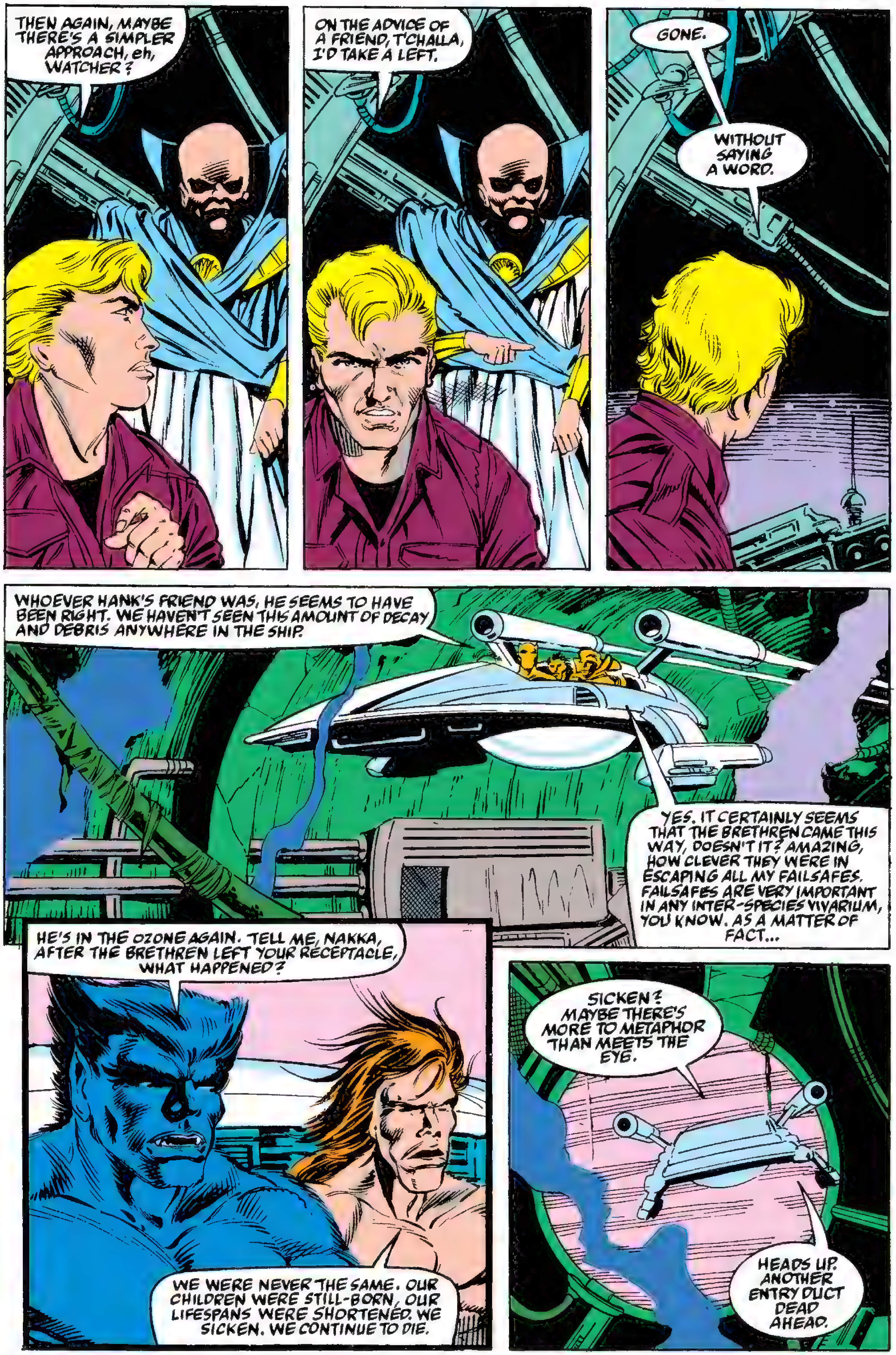
DID YOU HEAR ME, SYBYL DORN?
THANE ECTOR, RIGHTFUL LEADER OF THE BRETHREN COMMANDS YOU TO--
--STOP!!
FWAMM
UHGHH
BAASK

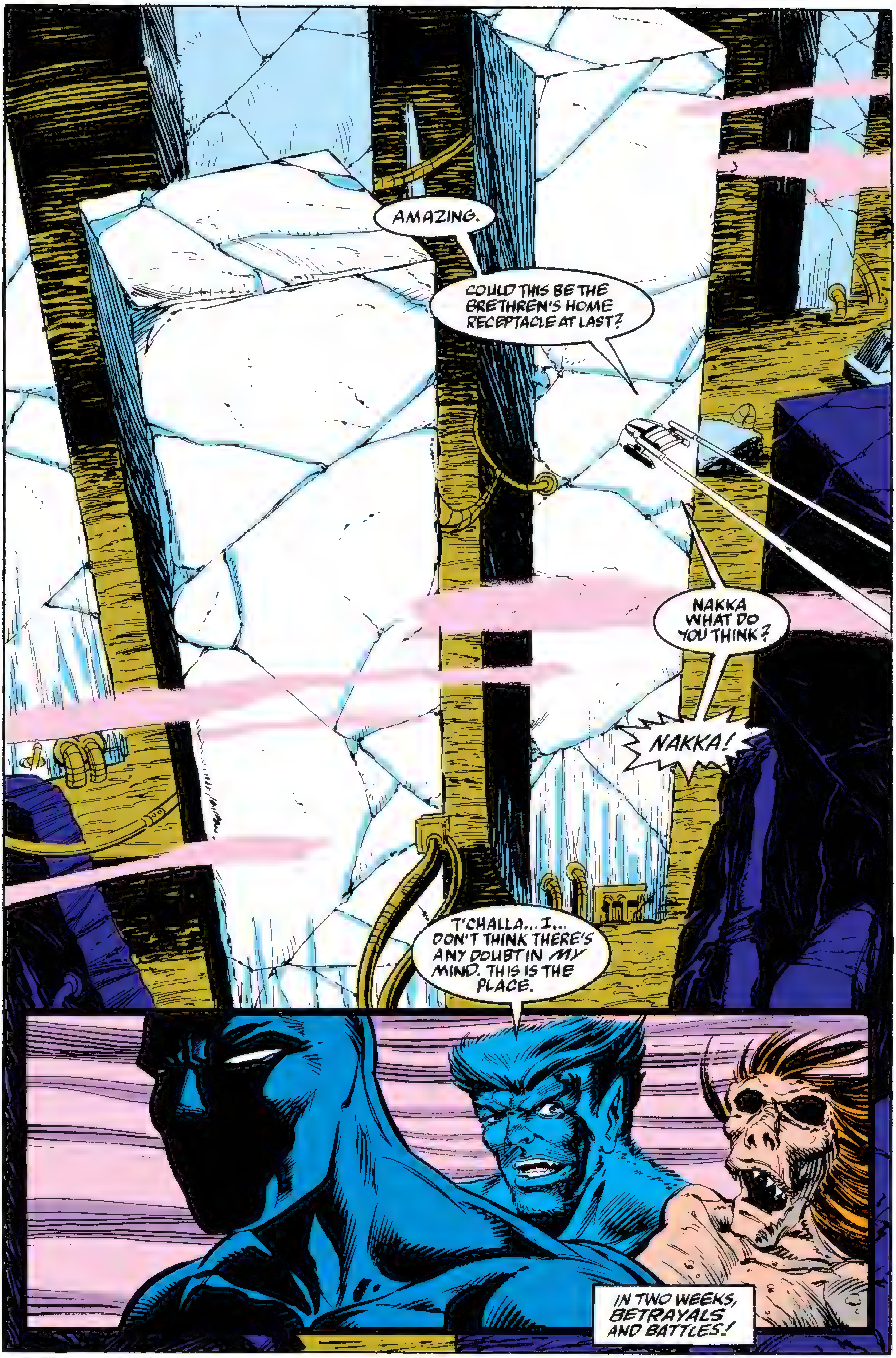

ONCE YOU DESERVED TO BE CALLED THANE, ONCE YOU LEAD OUR PEOPLE TO GLORY--
-- BUT, OH! HOW YOU HAVE FALLEN. LOOK AT YOU-- NO MORE THAN A SIMPERING LOVESICK FOOL!
PAY HEED, MY LORD, THE BRETHREN SHALL HEAR OF THIS BASE BETRAYAL.
DO WHAT YOU MUST, SYBYL DORN.
SERSI-- ARE YOU UNHURT?
WELL, I WOULDN'T EXACTLY SAY THAT...
...BUT I'LL LIVE.
WHAT... HAPPENED TO DORN? MORE TO THE POINT, *WHAT* DID SHE BECOME?
THANE ECTOR, WHO *ARE* THE BRETHREN?
WHEN A BOY DESTINED TO BECOME THANE REACHES HIS FIFTEENTH YEAR, HE AND HIS BROTHER ARE TOLD THE TRUTH OF OUR PEOPLE. NO OUTSIDER HAS EVER BEEN MADE PRIVY...
...UNTIL NOW.


I TAKE IT THIS "TRUTH" IS NOT PARTICULARLY PLEASANT.
TRUTH SELDOM IS.
EVEN AS WE SPEAK, EVERY FIBER OF MY BEING BURNS TO PURGE THIS PLANET OF LIFE. ITS BIOSPHERE TAUNTS ME... BECKONING LIKE A FLAME TO THE MOTH.
AND EVERY BRETHREN FEELS THE SAME NEED TO QUENCH THAT BRIGHT SPARK.
FOR THIS, WE SPREAD TERROR THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE. AND WE HAVE NO CHOICE. IT IS HOW WE WERE CREATED BY THOSE MEDDLERS OF DESTINY, THE CELESTIALS.
YES, I WAS TOLD OF THEM ON MY FIFTEENTH BIRTHDAY... HOW THEY HAD MADE MY PEOPLE... AND YOURS, SERSI.
BUT THE ETERNALS WERE CREATED OUT OF THE STUFF OF MAN, WHILE THE BRETHREN WERE FASHIONED FROM A DIFFERENT PLACE ENTIRELY. A PLACE OF SHAME AND DEGRADATION.
AND BECAUSE OF THAT, I ENVIED EVERY RACE WE ENCOUNTERED. EVEN AS I KILLED THEM... HOW I FELT THE BITTER STING OF JEALOUSY! FOR EVEN THE MOST PALE AND INSIGNIFICANT LIFEFORMS WERE BETTER BY FAR THAN THE BRETHREN.


YOU SEE IN THESE SCROLLS OUR MAGNIFICENT HISTORY. OUR PROUD MILITARY CONQUESTS. HOW WE *HIDE* BEHIND THESE MYTHS OF A WARRIOR RACE. WHAT A *PITEOUS* FAÇADE!
WE KILL BECAUSE WE MUST. WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO MOVE ONWARD, EVER ONWARD, TO TAKE AND ANNIHILATE. THAT IS WHY WE AND WE ALONE OF ALL THE RACES ABOARD THE COLLECTOR'S SHIP ESCAPED HIS GRASP.
BECAUSE WE MUST MOVE THROUGH THE BODY THAT IS THIS UNIVERSE SEARCHING FOR HEALTHY WORLDS TO INVADE, INFECT AND KILL.
INFECT--?
THANE ECTOR, SPEAK PLAINLY.
IF THE ETERNALS WERE AN OFFSHOOT OF HOMO SAPIENS, WHAT WAS THE GENETIC SOURCE FOR THE BRETHREN?
SPEAK PLAINLY? SO EASILY ASKED, SO DIFFICULT TO RESPOND.
WE ARE THE MUCK, THE MIRE, THE OFFAL. WE *ARE* THE DISEASE OF THE UNIVERSE--GIVEN SENTIENCE BY THE LORDLY CELESTIALS? YES. BUT SOULS? I THINK NOT.
BY OLYMPIA.

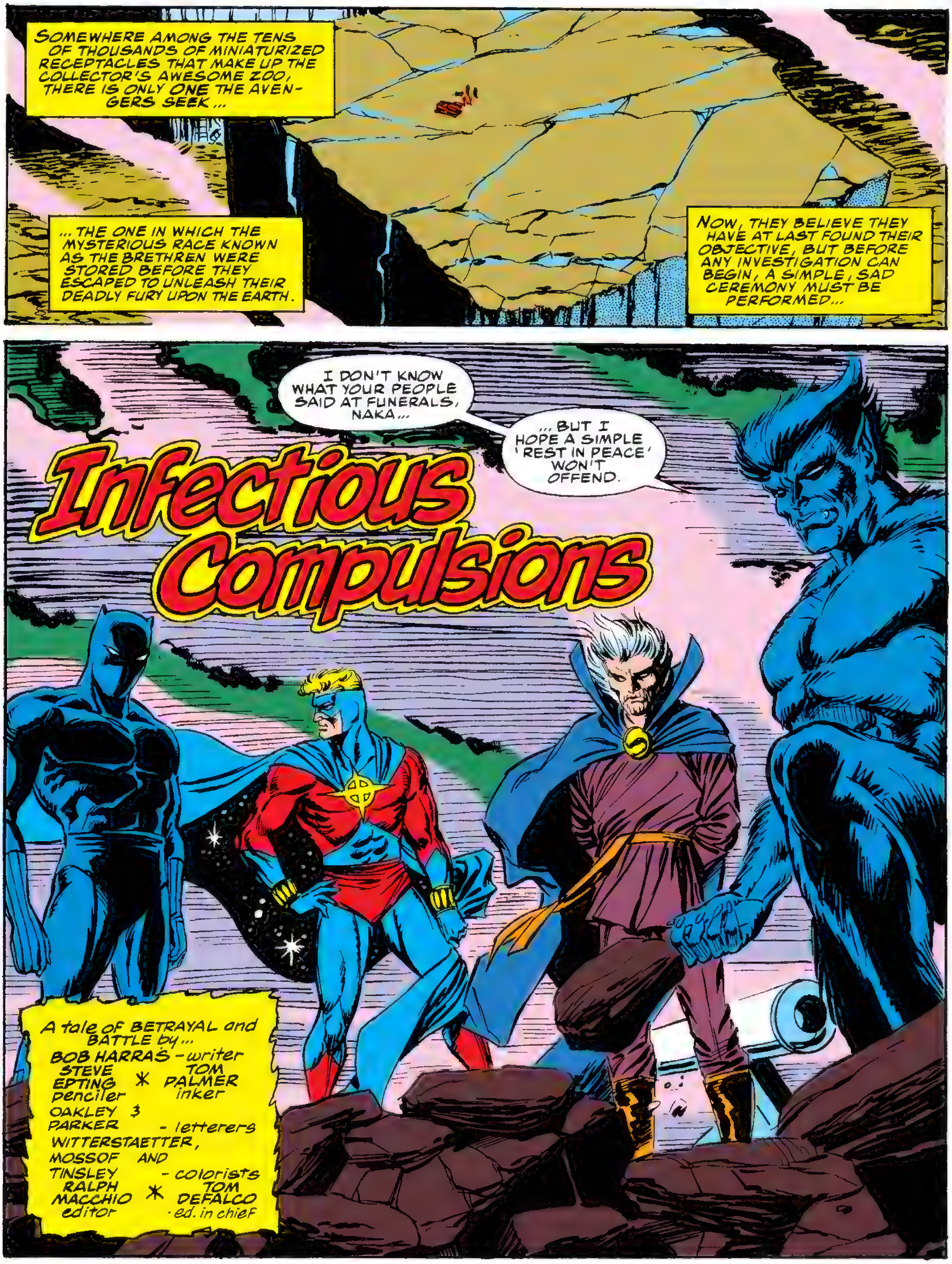

THE MOON.
THIS DATA CAP SENT ME IS ASTOUNDING! IT INDICATES THE BRETHREN--
YOU AGAIN.
Y'KNOW, AT FIRST, I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND THE FEAR YOU FELT WHEN THE BRETHREN CRASHED HERE. AFTER ALL, WE'VE FOUGHT THE KREE AND SKRULLS IN THE PAST WITHOUT A PEEP FROM YOU.
ERGO, THE BRETHREN ARE SOMETHING EVEN MORE DANGEROUS.
YOU'RE STILL WORRIED, AREN'T YOU? YOU WANT TO TELL US WHAT YOU FEAR, BUT YOUR OATH PREVENTS YOU. IS AN OATH WORTH THE LIVES OF AN ENTIRE PLANET?
HANK. T'CHALLA HERE. WE'VE COME TO ANOTHER JUNCTURE POINT.
THIS SYSTEM IS LIKE A RABBIT'S NEST. IT'S A WONDER THE BRETHREN EVER FOUND THEIR WAY OUT OF HERE.
BASED ON THE INFORMATION SO FAR, WHAT PATH DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD TAKE?
HOLD ON, LET ME CALL UP THE SHIP'S SCHEMATIC, T'CHALLA. I'LL PATCH IN THE VARIABLES.
SILENT FEET MOVE FORWARD...

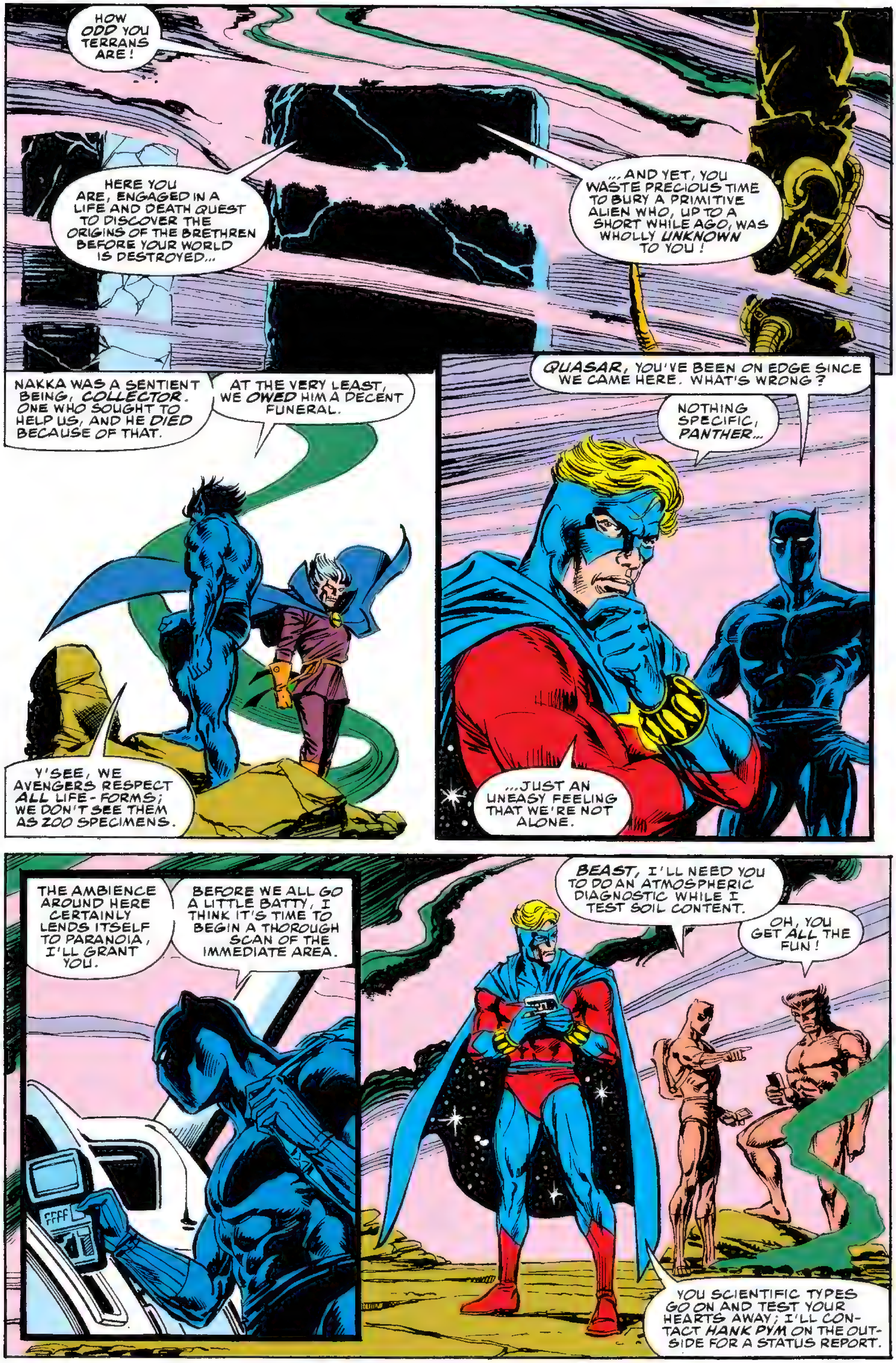

THEN AGAIN, MAYBE THERE'S A SIMPLER APPROACH, eh, WATCHER?
ON THE ADVICE OF A FRIEND, T'CHALLA, I'D TAKE A LEFT.
GONE.
WITHOUT SAYING A WORD.
WHOEVER HANK'S FRIEND WAS, HE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN RIGHT. WE HAVEN'T SEEN THIS AMOUNT OF DECAY AND DEBRIS ANYWHERE IN THE SHIP.
YES, IT CERTAINLY SEEMS THAT THE BRETHREN CAME THIS WAY, DOESN'T IT? AMAZING, HOW CLEVER THEY WERE IN ESCAPING ALL MY FAILSAFES. FAILSAFES ARE VERY IMPORTANT IN ANY INTER-SPECIES VIVARIUM, YOU KNOW. AS A MATTER OF FACT...
HE'S IN THE OZONE AGAIN. TELL ME, NAKKA, AFTER THE BRETHREN LEFT YOUR RECEPTACLE, WHAT HAPPENED?
WE WERE NEVER THE SAME. OUR CHILDREN WERE STILL-BORN, OUR LIFESPANS WERE SHORTENED. WE SICKEN. WE CONTINUE TO DIE.
SICKEN? MAYBE THERE'S MORE TO METAPHOR THAN MEETS THE EYE.
HEADS UP. ANOTHER ENTRY DUCT DEAD AHEAD.

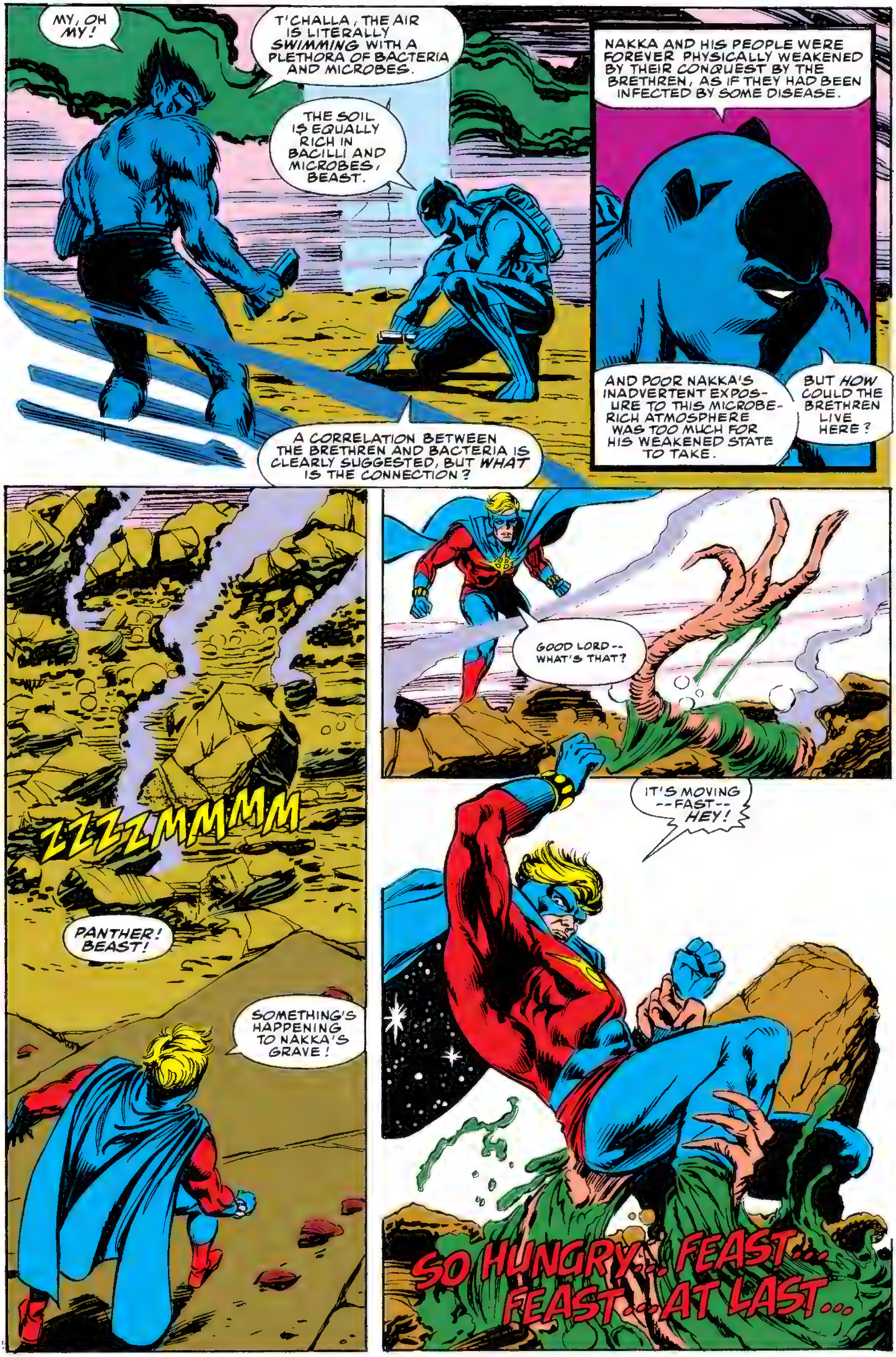

AMAZING.
COULD THIS BE THE BRETHREN'S HOME RECEPTACLE AT LAST?
NAKKA WHAT DO YOU THINK?
NAKKA!
T'CHALLA... I... DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY DOUBT IN *MY* MIND. THIS IS THE PLACE.
IN TWO WEEKS, BETRAYALS AND BATTLES!

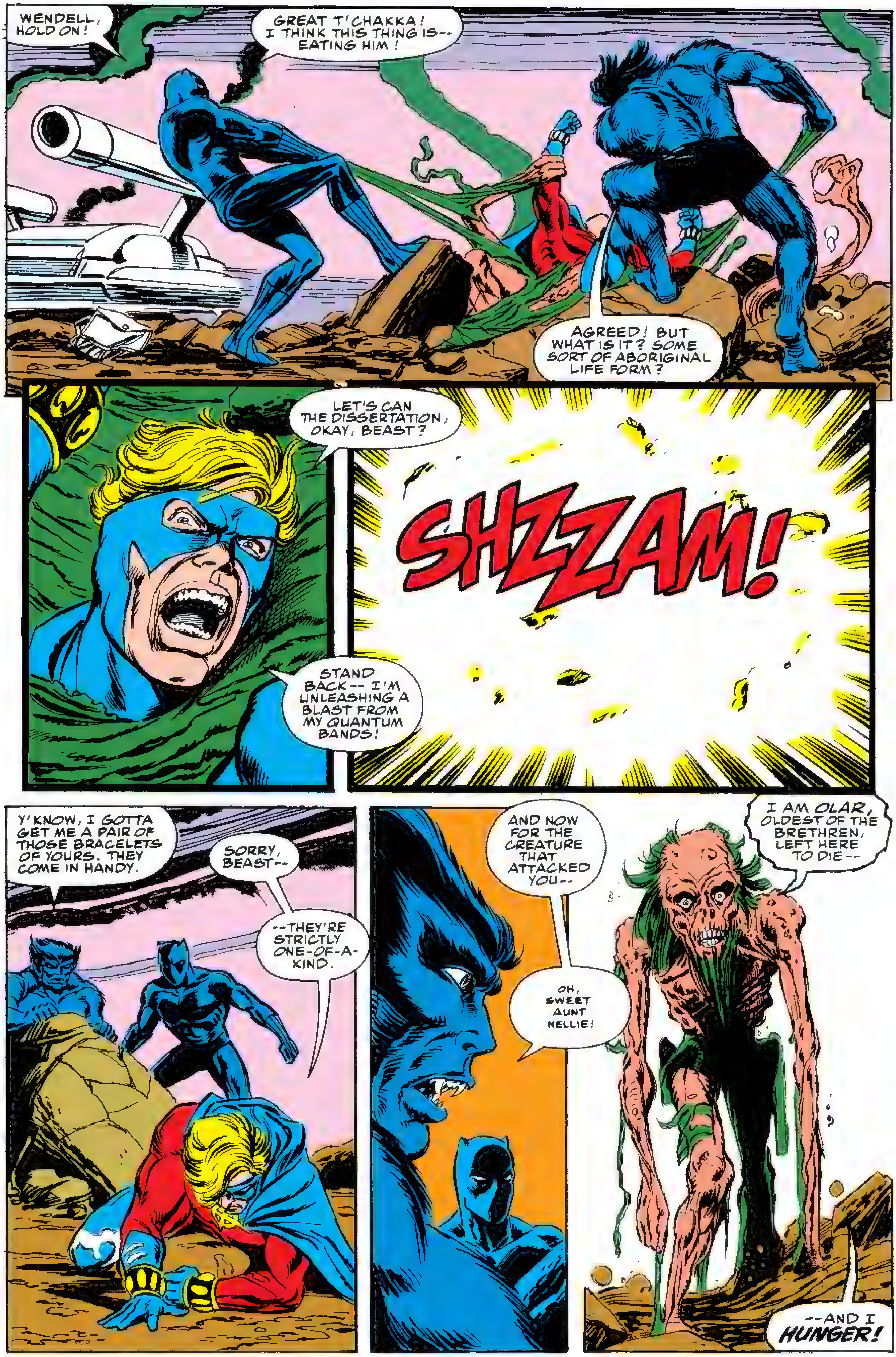
MARVEL COMICS
THE COLLECTION OBSESSION PART 4
AVENGERS
© 1991 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN/UK 65p
338
LATE SEPT
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
AT LAST! THE TRUE ENEMY REVEALED!

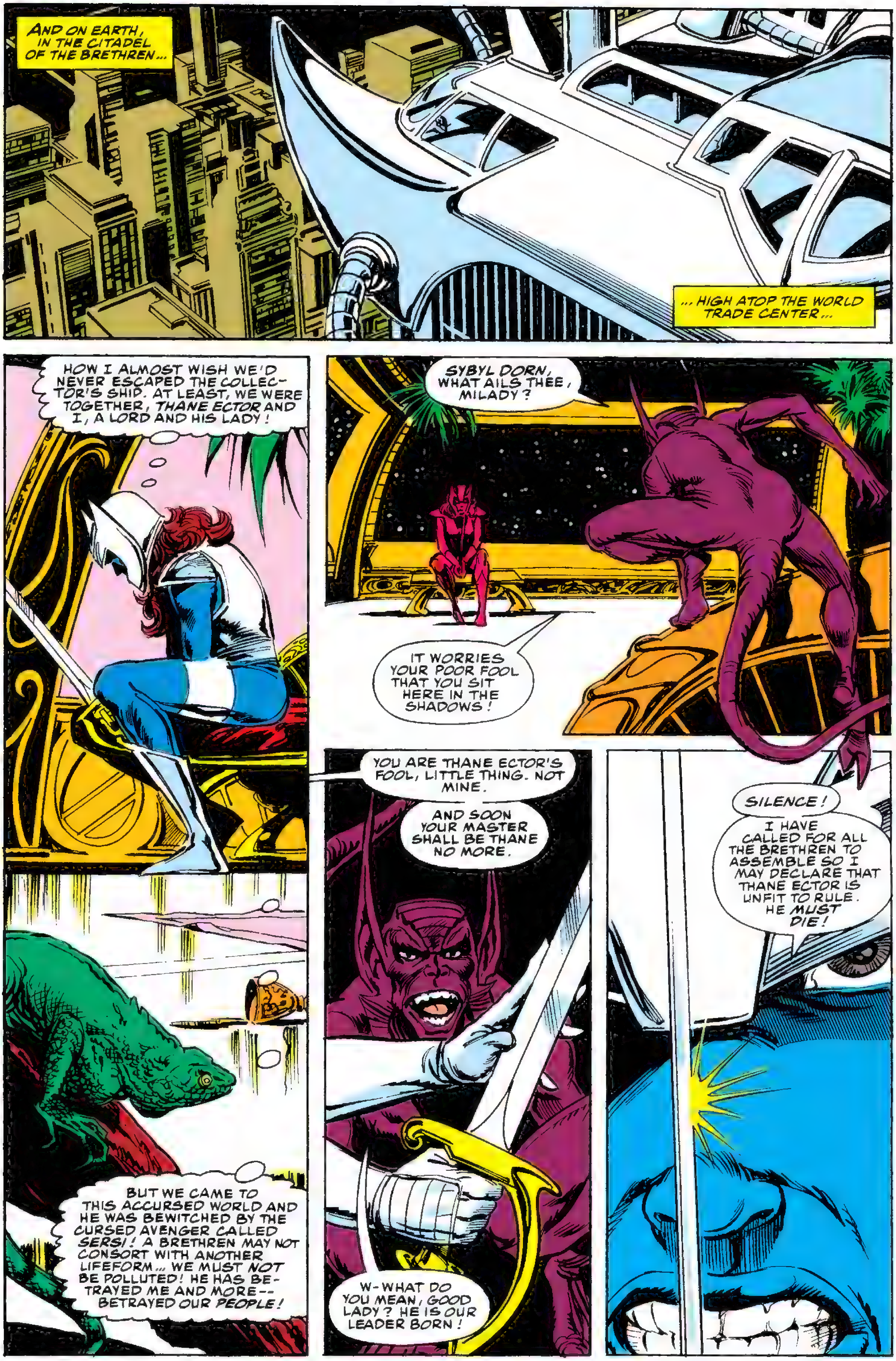
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

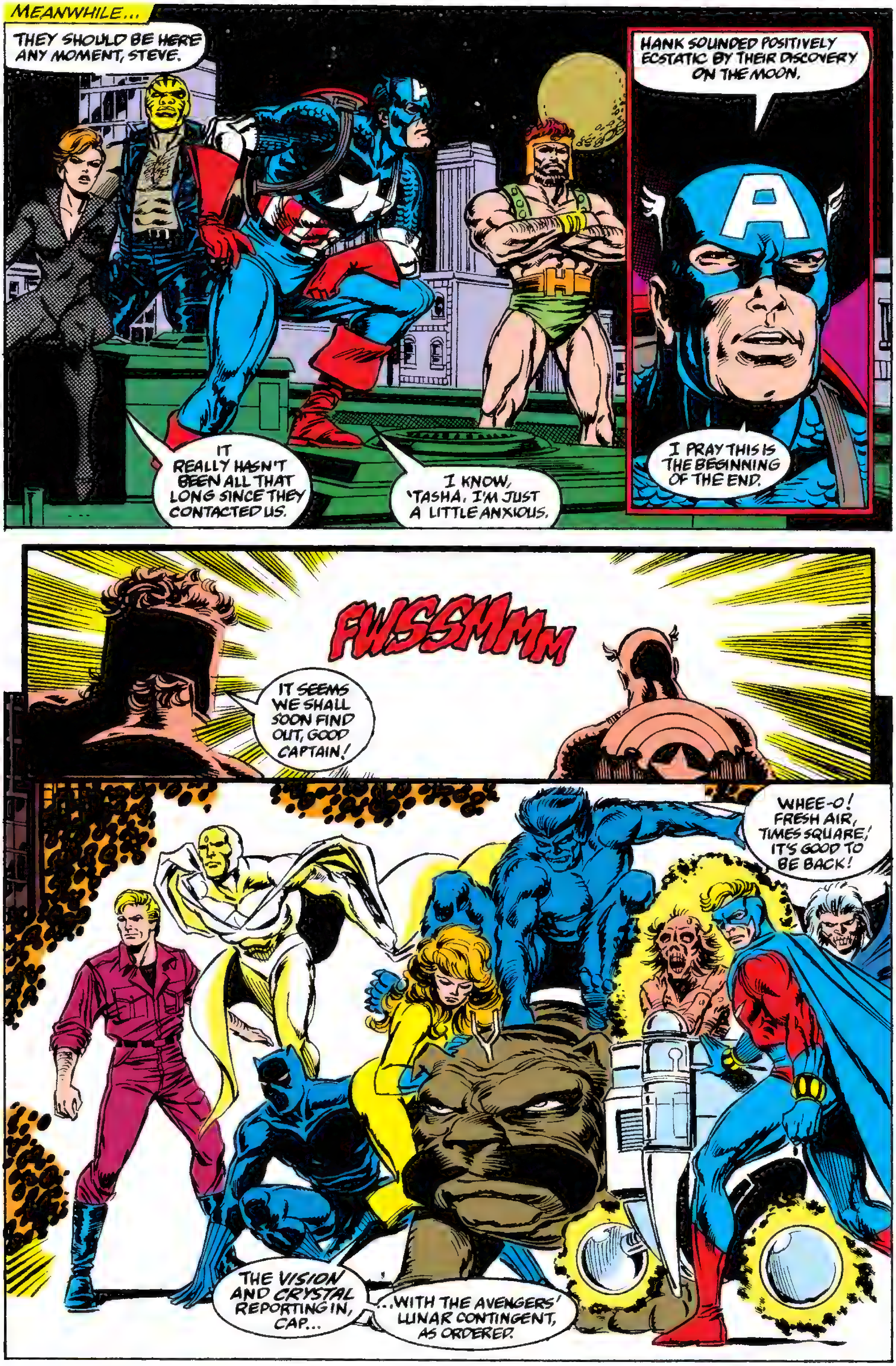

SOMEWHERE AMONG THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF MINIATURIZED RECEPTACLES THAT MAKE UP THE COLLECTOR'S AWESOME ZOO, THERE IS ONLY ONE THE AVENGERS SEEK...
...THE ONE IN WHICH THE MYSTERIOUS RACE KNOWN AS THE BRETHREN WERE STORED BEFORE THEY ESCAPED TO UNLEASH THEIR DEADLY FURY UPON THE EARTH.
NOW, THEY BELIEVE THEY HAVE AT LAST FOUND THEIR OBJECTIVE, BUT BEFORE ANY INVESTIGATION CAN BEGIN, A SIMPLE, SAD CEREMONY MUST BE PERFORMED...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR PEOPLE SAID AT FUNERALS, NAKA...
...BUT I HOPE A SIMPLE 'REST IN PEACE' WON'T OFFEND.
Infectious Compulsions
A tale of BETRAYAL and BATTLE by... BOB HARRAS - writer STEVE EPTING penciler * TOM PALMER inker OAKLEY & PARKER - letterers WITTERSTAETTER, MOSSOF AND TINSLEY - colorists RALPH MACCHIO editor * TOM DEFALCO - ed. in chief

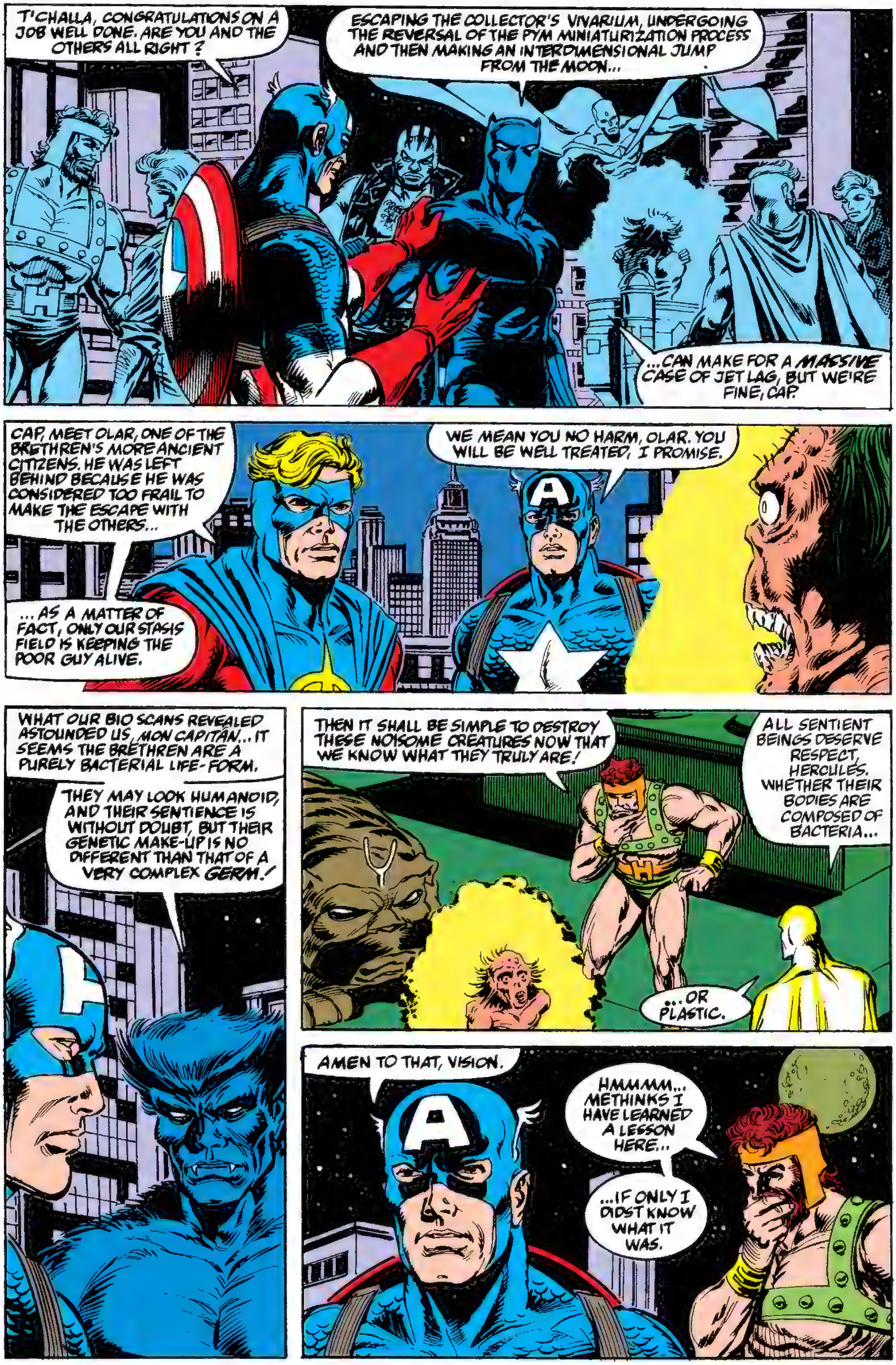

HOW *ODD* YOU TERRANS ARE!
HERE YOU ARE, ENGAGED IN A LIFE AND DEATH QUEST TO DISCOVER THE ORIGINS OF THE BRETHREN BEFORE YOUR WORLD IS DESTROYED...
...AND YET, YOU WASTE PRECIOUS TIME TO BURY A PRIMITIVE ALIEN WHO, UP TO A SHORT WHILE AGO, WAS WHOLLY *UNKNOWN* TO YOU!
NAKKA WAS A SENTIENT BEING, *COLLECTOR*. ONE WHO SOUGHT TO HELP US, AND HE *DIED* BECAUSE OF THAT.
AT THE VERY LEAST, WE *OWED* HIM A DECENT FUNERAL.
Y'SEE, WE AVENGERS RESPECT *ALL* LIFE-FORMS; WE DON'T SEE THEM AS ZOO SPECIMENS.
QUASAR, YOU'VE BEEN ON EDGE SINCE WE CAME HERE. WHAT'S WRONG?
NOTHING SPECIFIC, *PANTHER*...
...JUST AN UNEASY FEELING THAT WE'RE NOT ALONE.
THE AMBIENCE AROUND HERE CERTAINLY LENDS ITSELF TO PARANOIA, I'LL GRANT YOU.
BEFORE WE ALL GO A LITTLE BATTY, I THINK IT'S TIME TO BEGIN A THOROUGH SCAN OF THE IMMEDIATE AREA.
BEAST, I'LL NEED YOU TO DO AN ATMOSPHERIC DIAGNOSTIC WHILE I TEST SOIL CONTENT.
OH, YOU GET *ALL* THE FUN!
YOU SCIENTIFIC TYPES GO ON AND TEST YOUR HEARTS AWAY; I'LL CONTACT *HANK PYM* ON THE OUTSIDE FOR A STATUS REPORT.

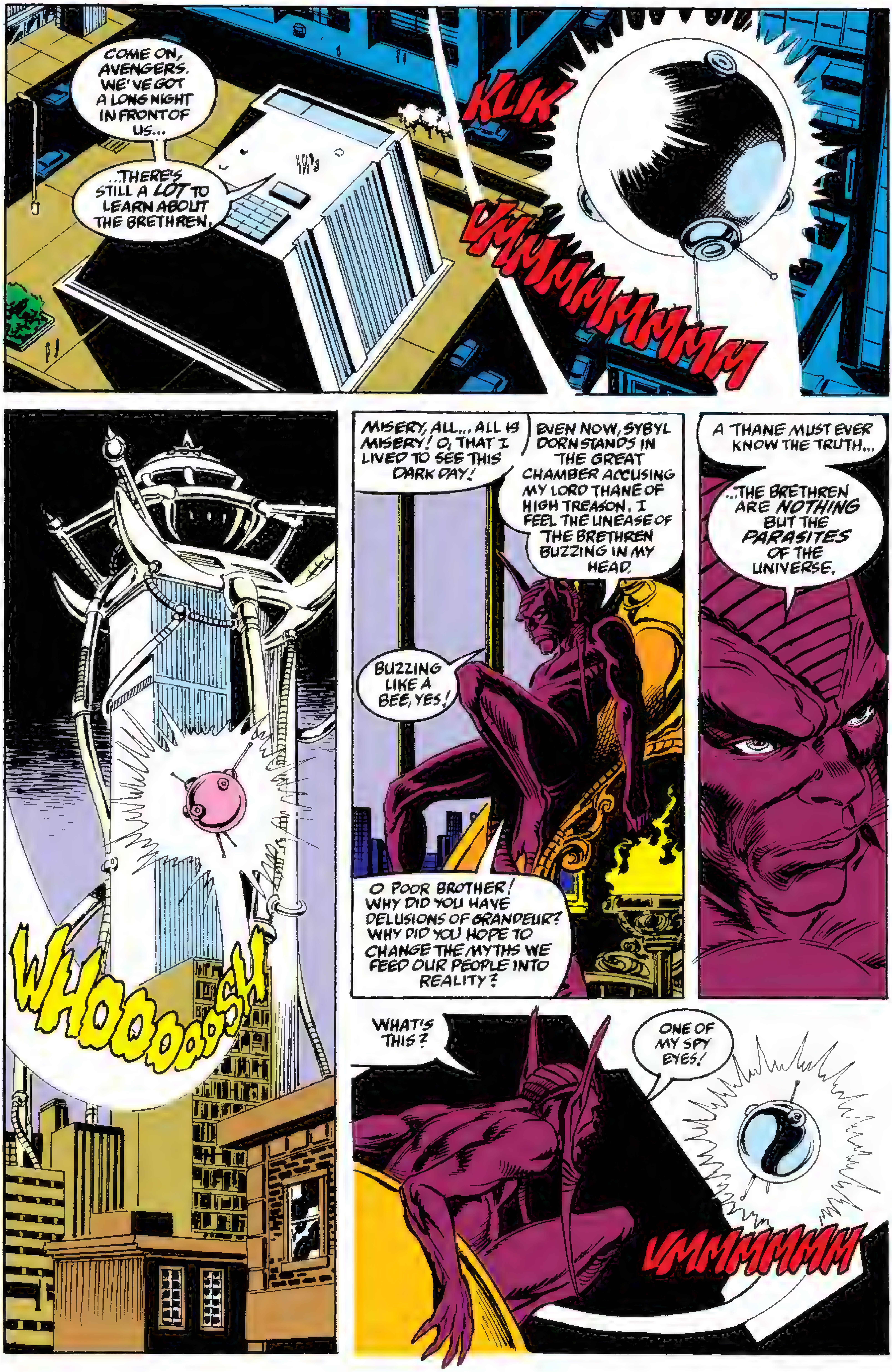

MY, OH MY!
T'CHALLA, THE AIR IS LITERALLY *SWIMMING* WITH A PLETHORA OF BACTERIA AND MICROBES.
THE SOIL IS EQUALLY RICH IN BACILLI AND MICROBES, BEAST.
A CORRELATION BETWEEN THE BRETHREN AND BACTERIA IS CLEARLY SUGGESTED, BUT *WHAT* IS THE CONNECTION?
NAKKA AND HIS PEOPLE WERE FOREVER PHYSICALLY WEAKENED BY THEIR CONQUEST BY THE BRETHREN, AS IF THEY HAD BEEN INFECTED BY SOME DISEASE.
AND POOR NAKKA'S INADVERTENT EXPOSURE TO THIS MICROBE-RICH ATMOSPHERE WAS TOO MUCH FOR HIS WEAKENED STATE TO TAKE.
BUT *HOW* COULD THE BRETHREN LIVE HERE?
ZZZZMMMMM
PANTHER! BEAST!
SOMETHING'S HAPPENING TO NAKKA'S GRAVE!
GOOD LORD-- WHAT'S THAT?
IT'S MOVING --FAST-- *HEY!*
SO HUNGRY... FEAST... FEAST... AT LAST...

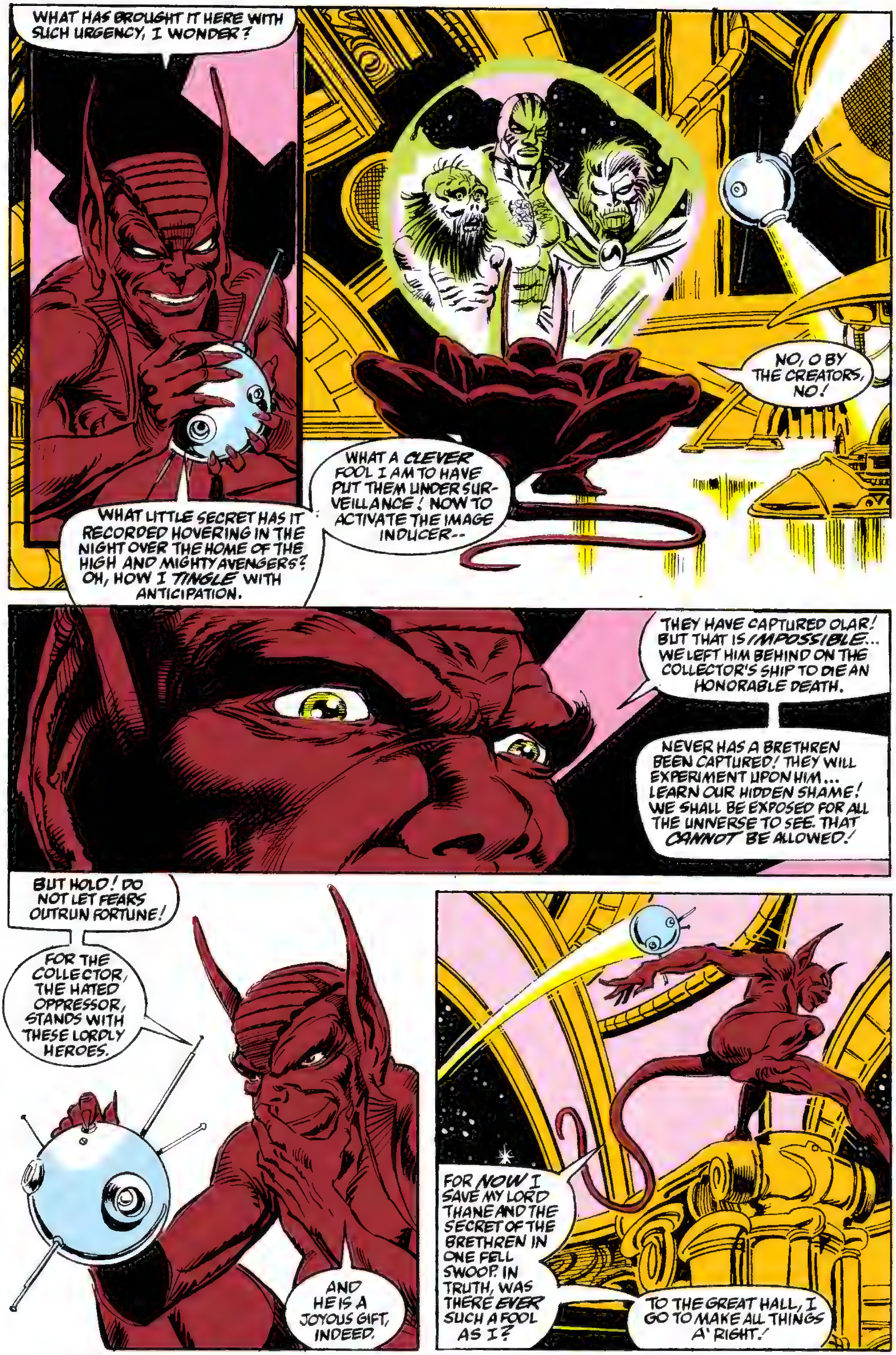

WENDELL, HOLD ON!
GREAT T'CHAKKA! I THINK THIS THING IS-- EATING HIM!
AGREED! BUT WHAT IS IT? SOME SORT OF ABORIGINAL LIFE FORM?
LET'S CAN THE DISSERTATION, OKAY, BEAST?
STAND BACK-- I'M UNLEASHING A BLAST FROM MY QUANTUM BANDS!
SHZZAM!
Y'KNOW, I GOTTA GET ME A PAIR OF THOSE BRACELETS OF YOURS. THEY COME IN HANDY.
SORRY, BEAST--
--THEY'RE STRICTLY ONE-OF-A-KIND.
AND NOW FOR THE CREATURE THAT ATTACKED YOU--
OH, SWEET AUNT NELLIE!
I AM OLAR, OLDEST OF THE BRETHREN, LEFT HERE TO DIE--
--AND I HUNGER!

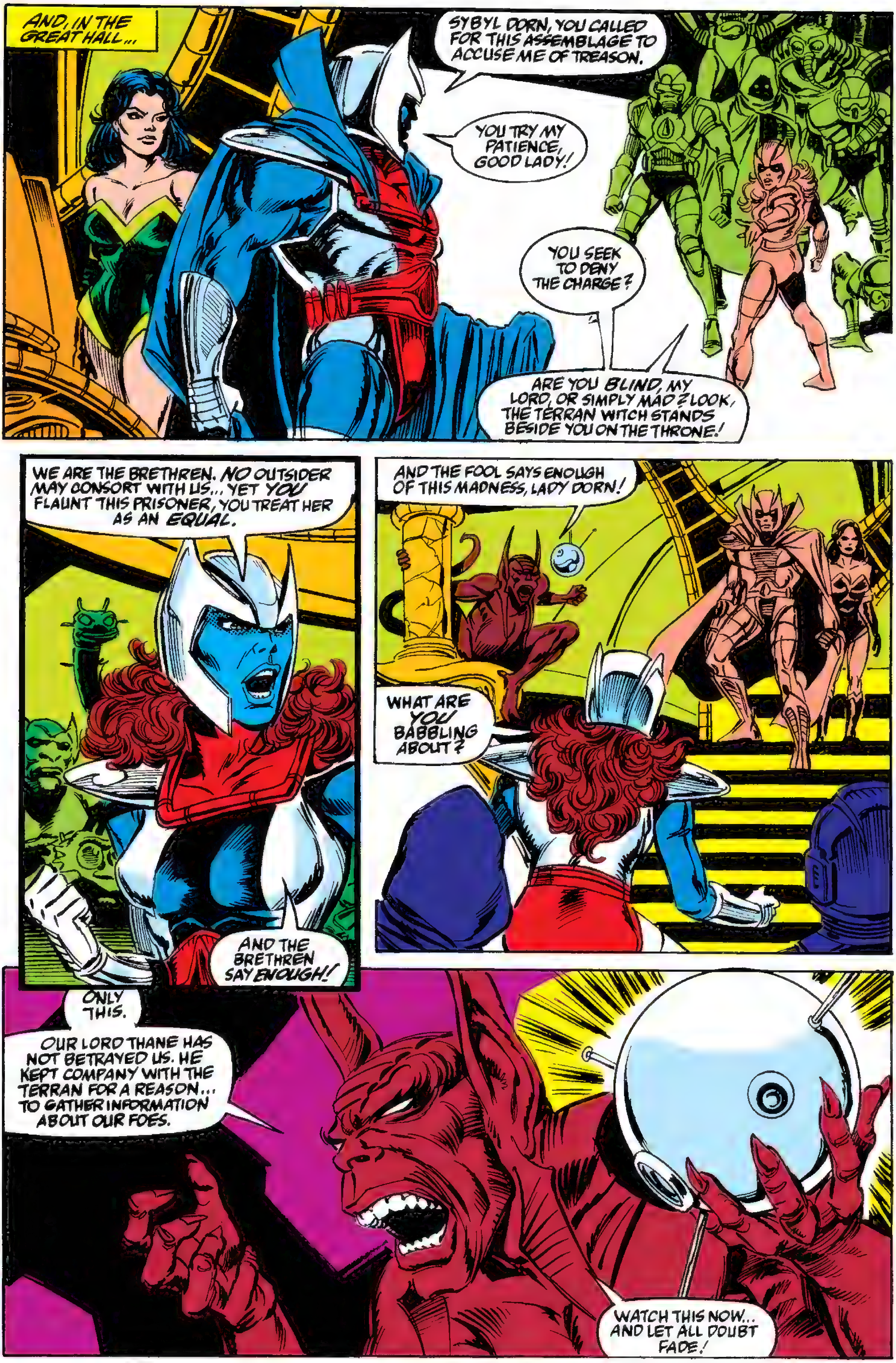

AND ON EARTH, IN THE CITADEL OF THE BRETHREN...
...HIGH ATOP THE WORLD TRADE CENTER...
HOW I ALMOST WISH WE'D NEVER ESCAPED THE COLLECTOR'S SHIP. AT LEAST, WE WERE TOGETHER, THANE ECTOR AND I, A LORD AND HIS LADY!
SYBYL DORN, WHAT AILS THEE, MILADY?
IT WORRIES YOUR POOR FOOL THAT YOU SIT HERE IN THE SHADOWS!
YOU ARE THANE ECTOR'S FOOL, LITTLE THING. NOT MINE.
AND SOON YOUR MASTER SHALL BE THANE NO MORE.
BUT WE CAME TO THIS ACCURSED WORLD AND HE WAS BEWITCHED BY THE CURSED AVENGER CALLED SERSI! A BRETHREN MAY NOT CONSORT WITH ANOTHER LIFEFORM... WE MUST NOT BE POLLUTED! HE HAS BETRAYED ME AND MORE-- BETRAYED OUR PEOPLE!
W-WHAT DO YOU MEAN, GOOD LADY? HE IS OUR LEADER BORN!
SILENCE!
I HAVE CALLED FOR ALL THE BRETHREN TO ASSEMBLE SO I MAY DECLARE THAT THANE ECTOR IS UNFIT TO RULE. HE MUST DIE!

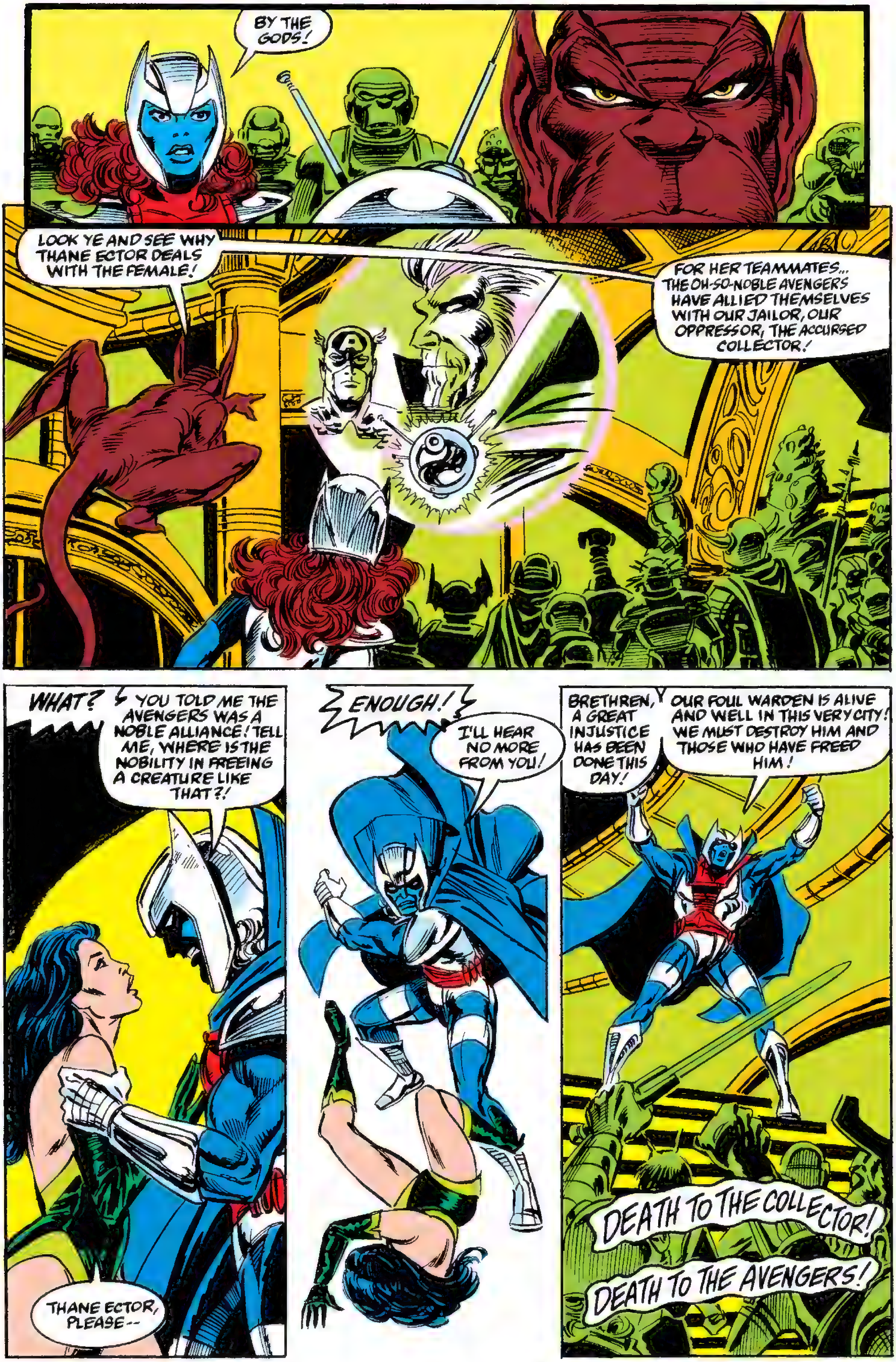

MEANWHILE...
THEY SHOULD BE HERE ANY MOMENT, STEVE.
IT REALLY HASN'T BEEN ALL THAT LONG SINCE THEY CONTACTED US.
I KNOW, 'TASHA. I'M JUST A LITTLE ANXIOUS.
HANK SOUNDED POSITIVELY ECSTATIC BY THEIR DISCOVERY ON THE MOON.
I PRAY THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE END.
FWSSMMM
IT SEEMS WE SHALL SOON FIND OUT, GOOD CAPTAIN!
WHEE-O! FRESH AIR, TIMES SQUARE! IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK!
THE VISION AND CRYSTAL REPORTING IN, CAP...
...WITH THE AVENGERS' LUNAR CONTINGENT, AS ORDERED.

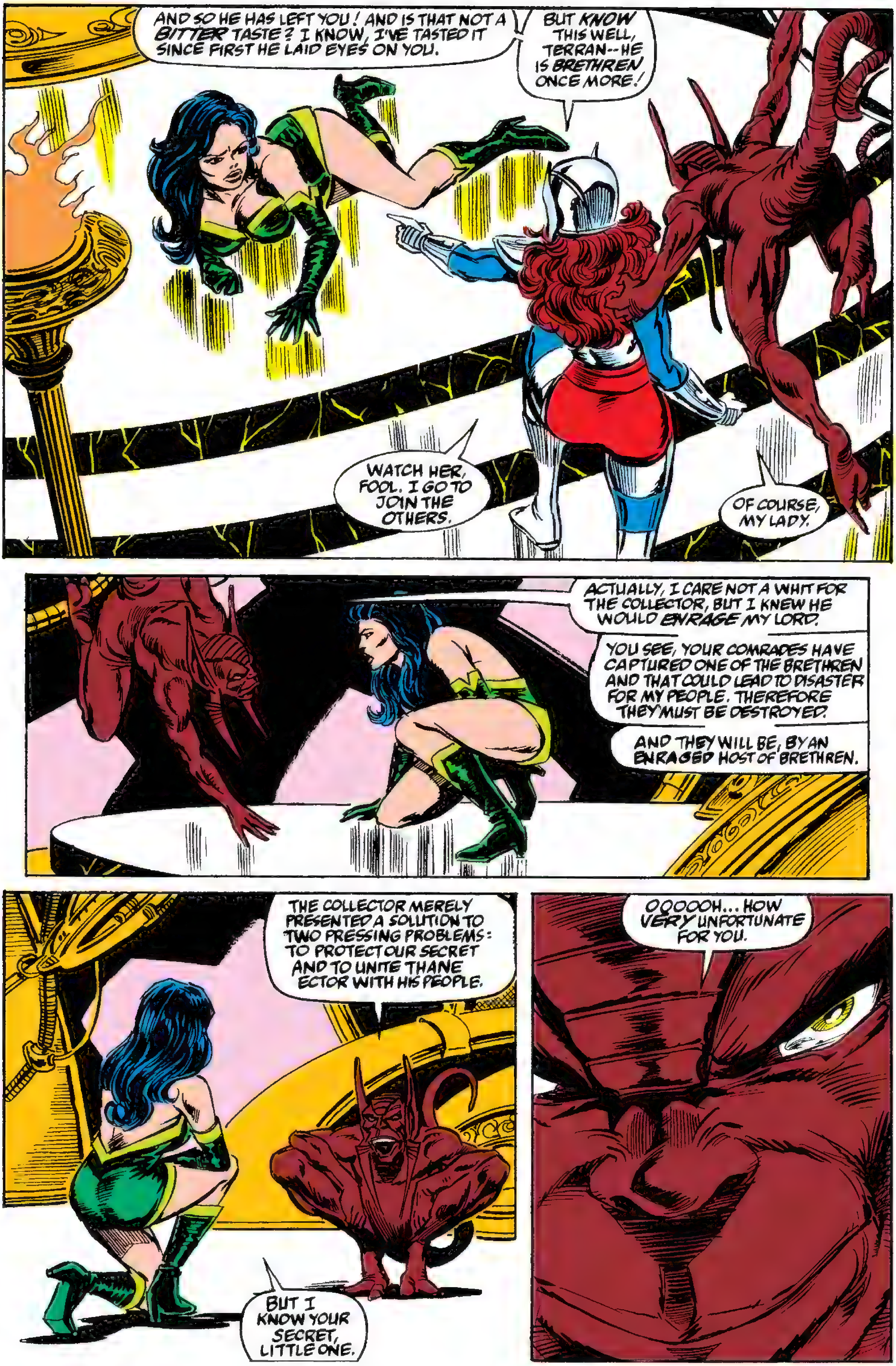

T'CHALLA, CONGRATULATIONS ON A JOB WELL DONE. ARE YOU AND THE OTHERS ALL RIGHT?
ESCAPING THE COLLECTOR'S VIVARIUM, UNDERGOING THE REVERSAL OF THE PYM MINIATURIZATION PROCESS AND THEN MAKING AN INTERDIMENSIONAL JUMP FROM THE MOON...
...CAN MAKE FOR A *MASSIVE* CASE OF JET LAG, BUT WE'RE FINE, CAP.
CAP, MEET OLAR, ONE OF THE BRETHREN'S MORE ANCIENT CITIZENS. HE WAS LEFT BEHIND BECAUSE HE WAS CONSIDERED TOO FRAIL TO MAKE THE ESCAPE WITH THE OTHERS...
...AS A MATTER OF FACT, ONLY OUR STASIS FIELD IS KEEPING THE POOR GUY ALIVE.
WE MEAN YOU NO HARM, OLAR. YOU WILL BE WELL TREATED, I PROMISE.
WHAT OUR BIO SCANS REVEALED ASTOUNDED US, MON CAPITAN... IT SEEMS THE BRETHREN ARE A PURELY BACTERIAL LIFE-FORM.
THEY MAY LOOK HUMANOID, AND THEIR SENTIENCE IS WITHOUT DOUBT, BUT THEIR GENETIC MAKE-UP IS NO DIFFERENT THAN THAT OF A VERY COMPLEX *GERM!*
THEN IT SHALL BE SIMPLE TO DESTROY THESE NOISOME CREATURES NOW THAT WE KNOW WHAT THEY TRULY ARE!
ALL SENTIENT BEINGS DESERVE RESPECT, HERCULES. WHETHER THEIR BODIES ARE COMPOSED OF BACTERIA...
...OR PLASTIC.
AMEN TO THAT, VISION.
HMMMM... METHINKS I HAVE LEARNED A LESSON HERE...
...IF ONLY I DIDST KNOW WHAT IT WAS.

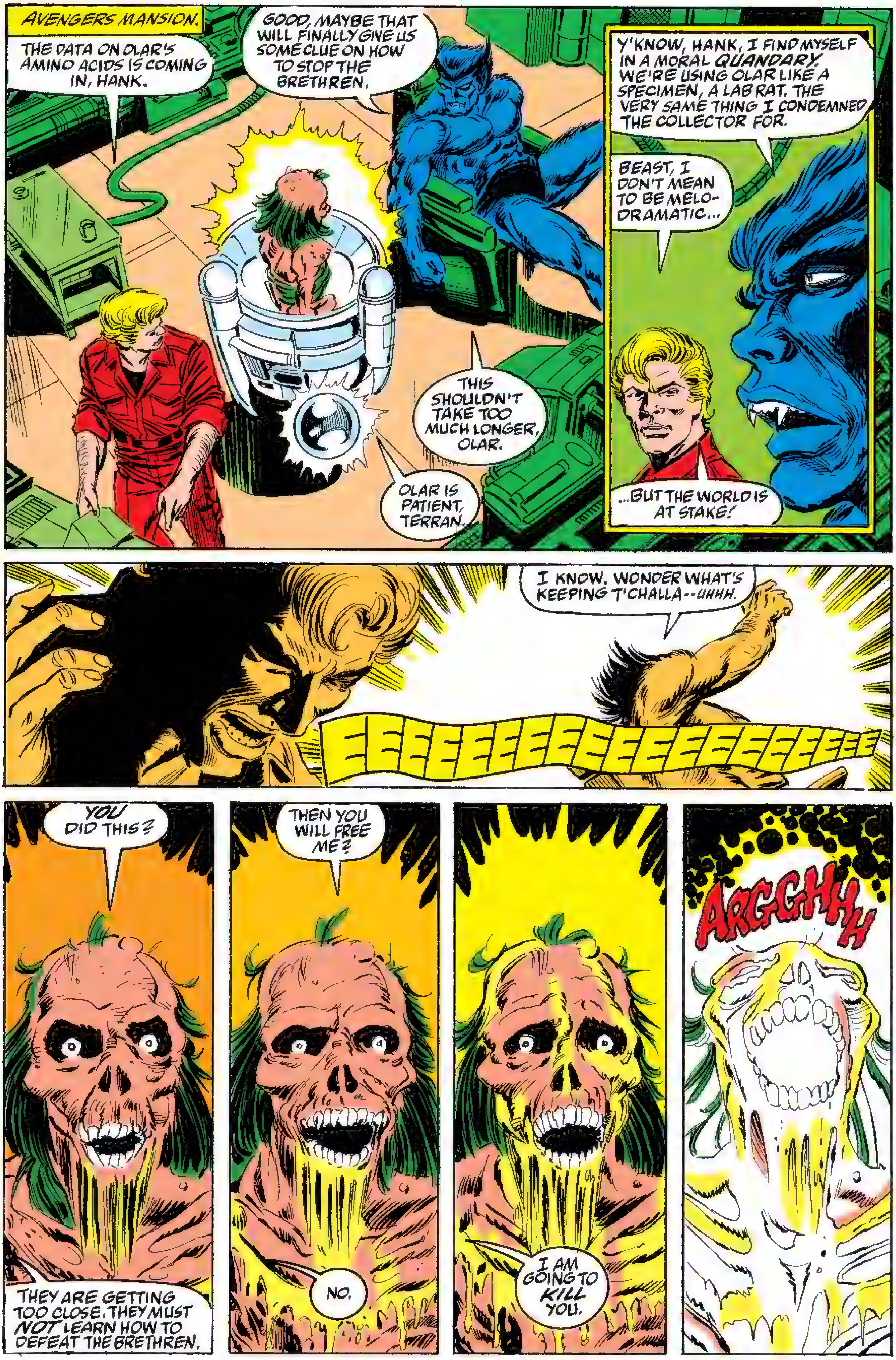

COME ON, AVENGERS. WE'VE GOT A LONG NIGHT IN FRONT OF US...
...THERE'S STILL A *LOT* TO LEARN ABOUT THE BRETHREN.
KLIK
UMMMMMMMMM
WHOOOooSH
MISERY, ALL... ALL IS MISERY! O, THAT I LIVED TO SEE THIS DARK DAY!
EVEN NOW, SYBYL DORN STANDS IN THE GREAT CHAMBER ACCUSING MY LORD THANE OF HIGH TREASON. I FEEL THE UNEASE OF THE BRETHREN BUZZING IN MY HEAD.
BUZZING LIKE A BEE, YES!
O POOR BROTHER! WHY DID YOU HAVE DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR? WHY DID YOU HOPE TO CHANGE THE MYTHS WE FEED OUR PEOPLE INTO REALITY?
A THANE MUST EVER KNOW THE TRUTH...
...THE BRETHREN ARE *NOTHING* BUT THE *PARASITES* OF THE UNIVERSE.
WHAT'S THIS?
ONE OF MY SPY EYES!
UMMMMMMM

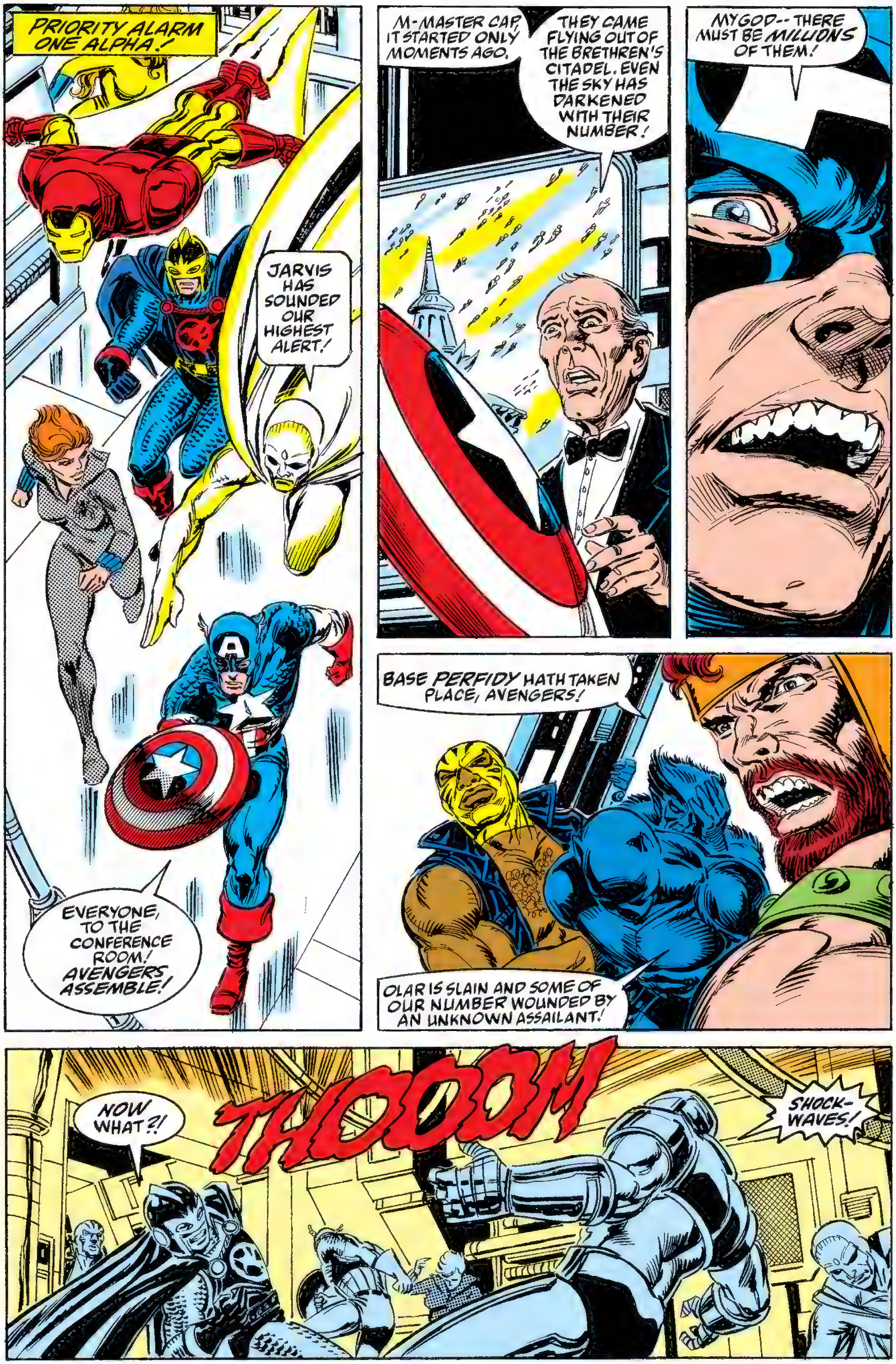

WHAT HAS BROUGHT IT HERE WITH SUCH URGENCY, I WONDER?
WHAT LITTLE SECRET HAS IT RECORDED HOVERING IN THE NIGHT OVER THE HOME OF THE HIGH AND MIGHTY AVENGERS? OH, HOW I TINGLE WITH ANTICIPATION.
WHAT A CLEVER FOOL I AM TO HAVE PUT THEM UNDER SURVEILLANCE! NOW TO ACTIVATE THE IMAGE INDUCER--
NO, O BY THE CREATORS, NO!
THEY HAVE CAPTURED OLAR! BUT THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE... WE LEFT HIM BEHIND ON THE COLLECTOR'S SHIP TO DIE AN HONORABLE DEATH.
NEVER HAS A BRETHREN BEEN CAPTURED! THEY WILL EXPERIMENT UPON HIM... LEARN OUR HIDDEN SHAME! WE SHALL BE EXPOSED FOR ALL THE UNIVERSE TO SEE. THAT CANNOT BE ALLOWED!
BUT HOLD! DO NOT LET FEARS OUTRUN FORTUNE!
FOR THE COLLECTOR, THE HATED OPPRESSOR, STANDS WITH THESE LORDLY HEROES.
AND HE IS A JOYOUS GIFT, INDEED.
FOR NOW I SAVE MY LORD THANE AND THE SECRET OF THE BRETHREN IN ONE FELL SWOOP. IN TRUTH, WAS THERE EVER SUCH A FOOL AS I?
TO THE GREAT HALL, I GO TO MAKE ALL THINGS A' RIGHT!

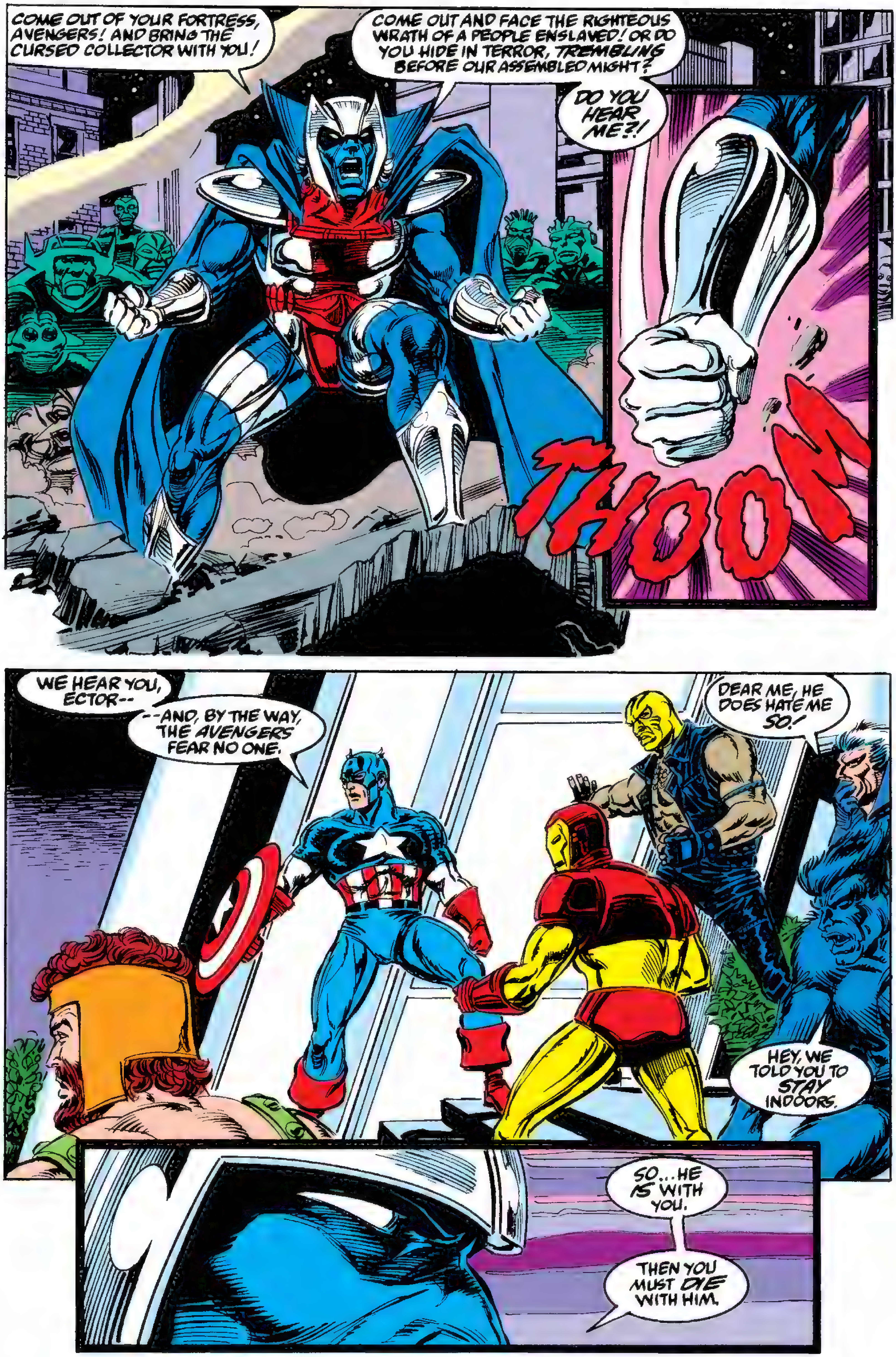

AND, IN THE GREAT HALL...
SYBYL DORN, YOU CALLED FOR THIS ASSEMBLAGE TO ACCUSE ME OF TREASON.
YOU TRY MY PATIENCE, GOOD LADY!
YOU SEEK TO DENY THE CHARGE?
ARE YOU BLIND, MY LORD, OR SIMPLY MAD? LOOK, THE TERRAN WITCH STANDS BESIDE YOU ON THE THRONE!
WE ARE THE BRETHREN. NO OUTSIDER MAY CONSORT WITH US... YET YOU FLAUNT THIS PRISONER, YOU TREAT HER AS AN EQUAL.
AND THE BRETHREN SAY ENOUGH!
AND THE FOOL SAYS ENOUGH OF THIS MADNESS, LADY DORN!
WHAT ARE YOU BABBLING ABOUT?
ONLY THIS.
OUR LORD THANE HAS NOT BETRAYED US. HE KEPT COMPANY WITH THE TERRAN FOR A REASON... TO GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT OUR FOES.
WATCH THIS NOW... AND LET ALL DOUBT FADE!

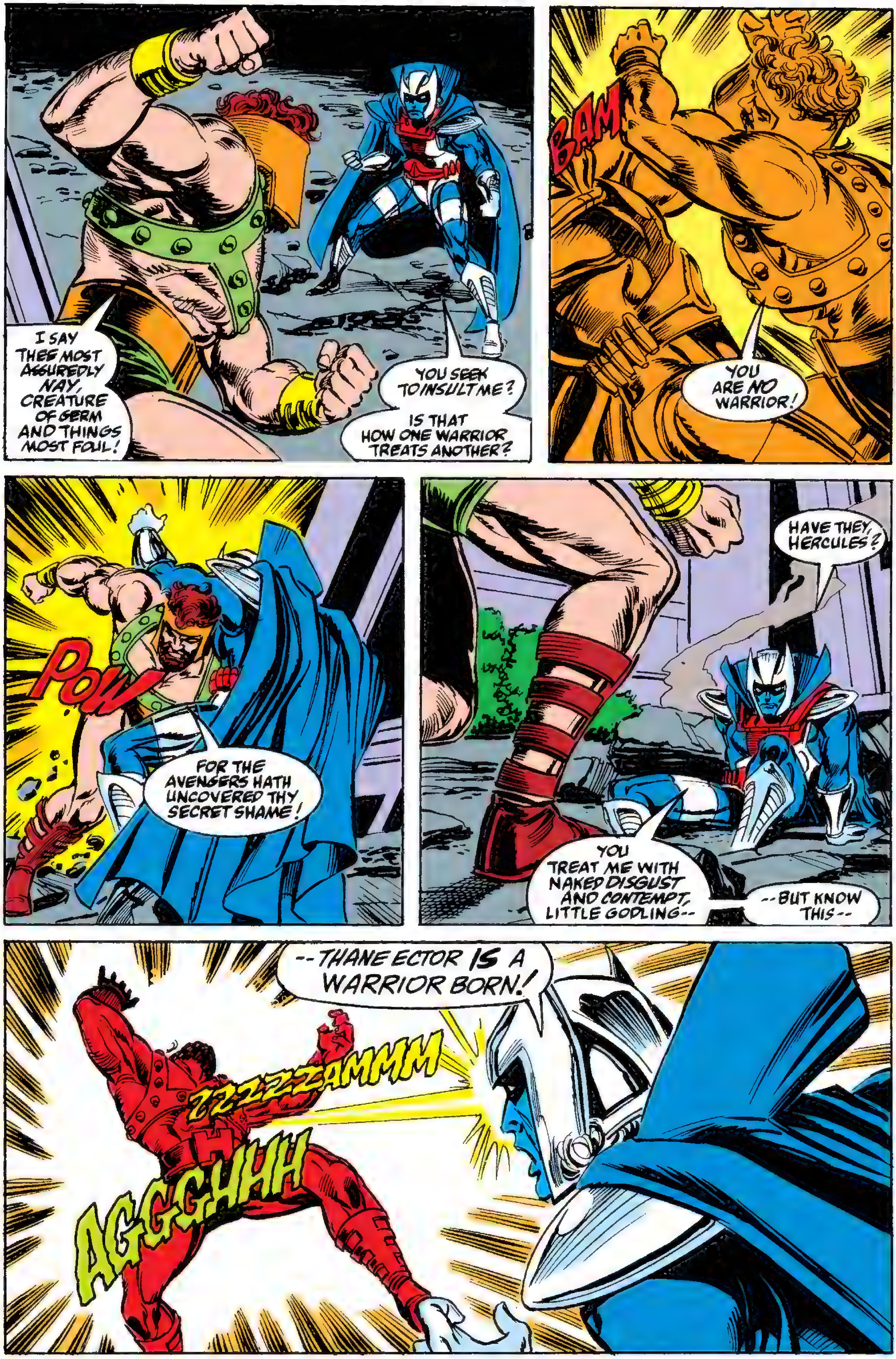

BY THE GODS!
LOOK YE AND SEE WHY THANE ECTOR DEALS WITH THE FEMALE!
FOR HER TEAMMATES... THE OH-SO-NOBLE AVENGERS HAVE ALLIED THEMSELVES WITH OUR JAILOR, OUR OPPRESSOR, THE ACCURSED COLLECTOR!
WHAT?
YOU TOLD ME THE AVENGERS WAS A NOBLE ALLIANCE! TELL ME, WHERE IS THE NOBILITY IN FREEING A CREATURE LIKE THAT?!
THANE ECTOR, PLEASE--
ENOUGH!
I'LL HEAR NO MORE FROM YOU!
BRETHREN, A GREAT INJUSTICE HAS BEEN DONE THIS DAY!
OUR FOUL WARDEN IS ALIVE AND WELL IN THIS VERY CITY! WE MUST DESTROY HIM AND THOSE WHO HAVE FREED HIM!
DEATH TO THE COLLECTOR!
DEATH TO THE AVENGERS!

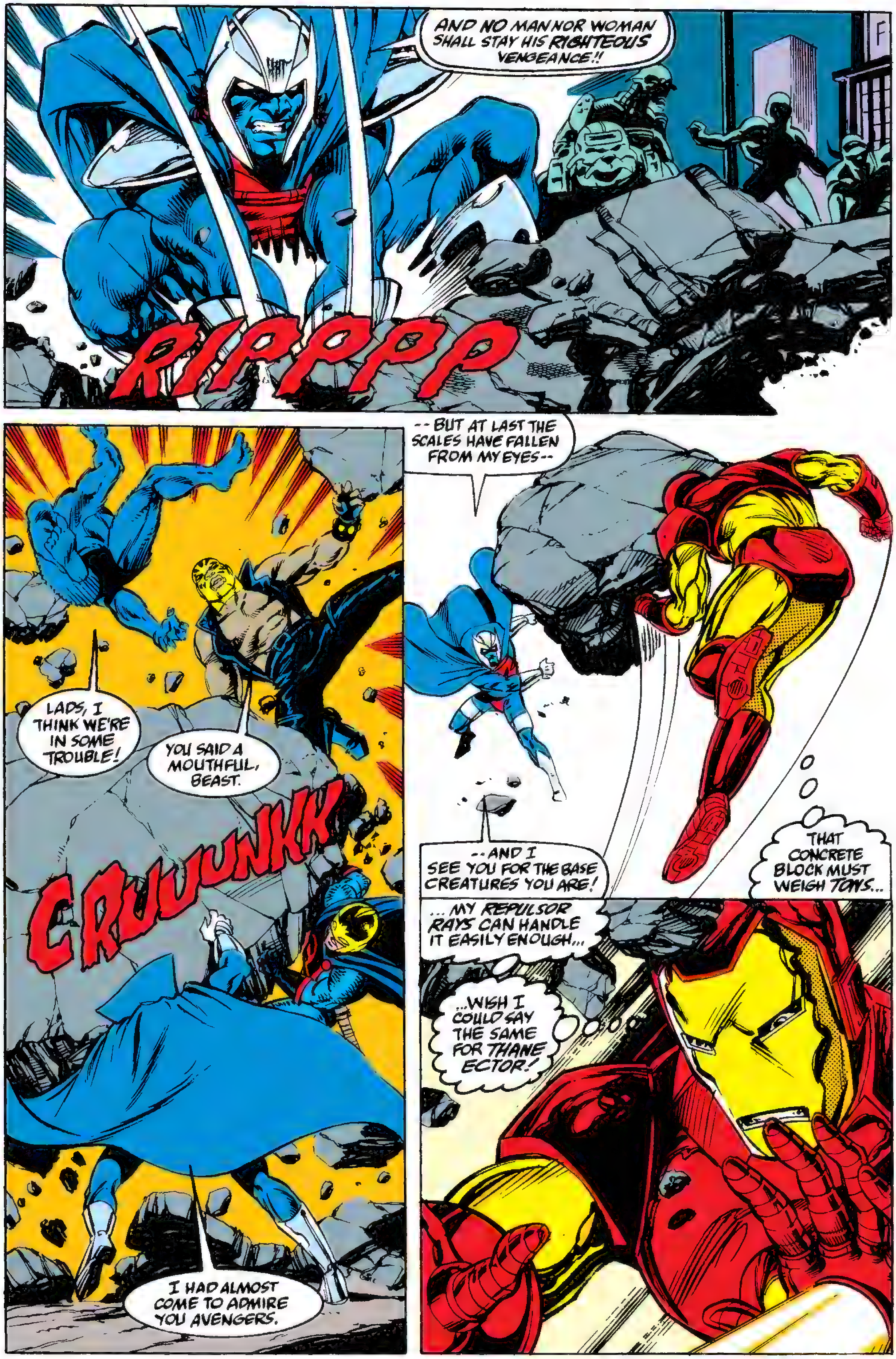

AND SO HE HAS LEFT YOU! AND IS THAT NOT A *BITTER* TASTE? I KNOW, I'VE TASTED IT SINCE FIRST HE LAID EYES ON YOU.
BUT *KNOW* THIS WELL, TERRAN--HE IS *BRETHREN* ONCE MORE!
WATCH HER, FOOL. I GO TO JOIN THE OTHERS.
OF COURSE, MY LADY.
ACTUALLY, I CARE NOT A WHIT FOR THE COLLECTOR, BUT I KNEW HE WOULD *ENRAGE* MY LORD.
YOU SEE, YOUR COMRADES HAVE CAPTURED ONE OF THE BRETHREN AND THAT COULD LEAD TO DISASTER FOR MY PEOPLE. THEREFORE THEY MUST BE DESTROYED.
AND THEY WILL BE, BY AN *ENRAGED* HOST OF BRETHREN.
THE COLLECTOR MERELY PRESENTED A SOLUTION TO TWO PRESSING PROBLEMS: TO PROTECT OUR SECRET AND TO UNITE THANE ECTOR WITH HIS PEOPLE.
BUT I KNOW YOUR SECRET, LITTLE ONE.
OOOOOH... HOW *VERY* UNFORTUNATE FOR YOU.

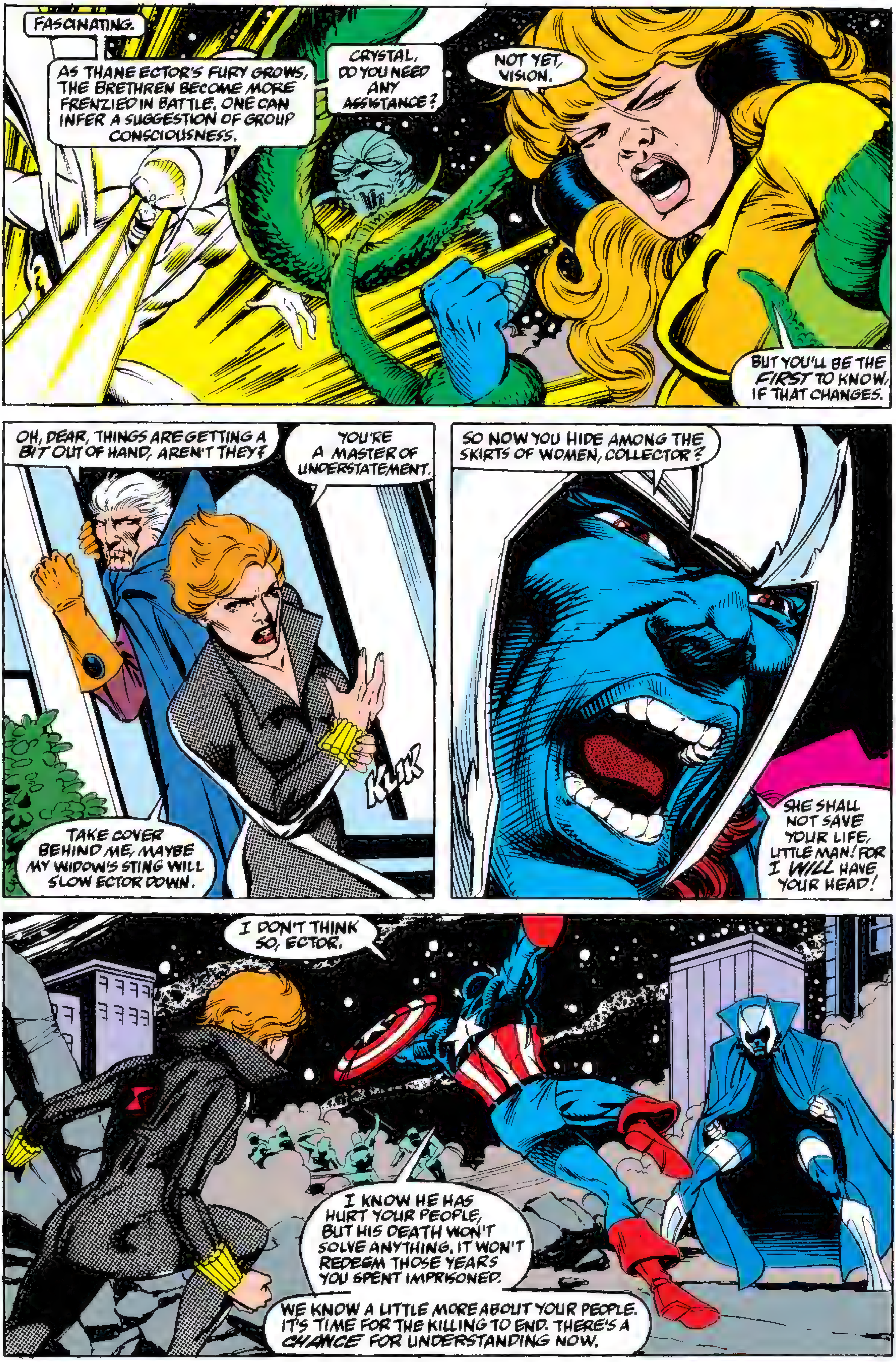

AVENGERS MANSION.
THE DATA ON OLAR'S AMINO ACIDS IS COMING IN, HANK.
GOOD, MAYBE THAT WILL FINALLY GIVE US SOME CLUE ON HOW TO STOP THE BRETHREN.
THIS SHOULDN'T TAKE TOO MUCH LONGER, OLAR.
OLAR IS PATIENT, TERRAN.
Y'KNOW, HANK, I FIND MYSELF IN A MORAL QUANDARY. WE'RE USING OLAR LIKE A SPECIMEN, A LAB RAT. THE VERY SAME THING I CONDEMNED THE COLLECTOR FOR.
BEAST, I DON'T MEAN TO BE MELODRAMATIC...
...BUT THE WORLD IS AT STAKE!
I KNOW. WONDER WHAT'S KEEPING T'CHALLA--UHHH.
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
YOU DID THIS?
THEY ARE GETTING TOO CLOSE. THEY MUST NOT LEARN HOW TO DEFEAT THE BRETHREN.
THEN YOU WILL FREE ME?
NO.
I AM GOING TO KILL YOU.
ARGGHHH

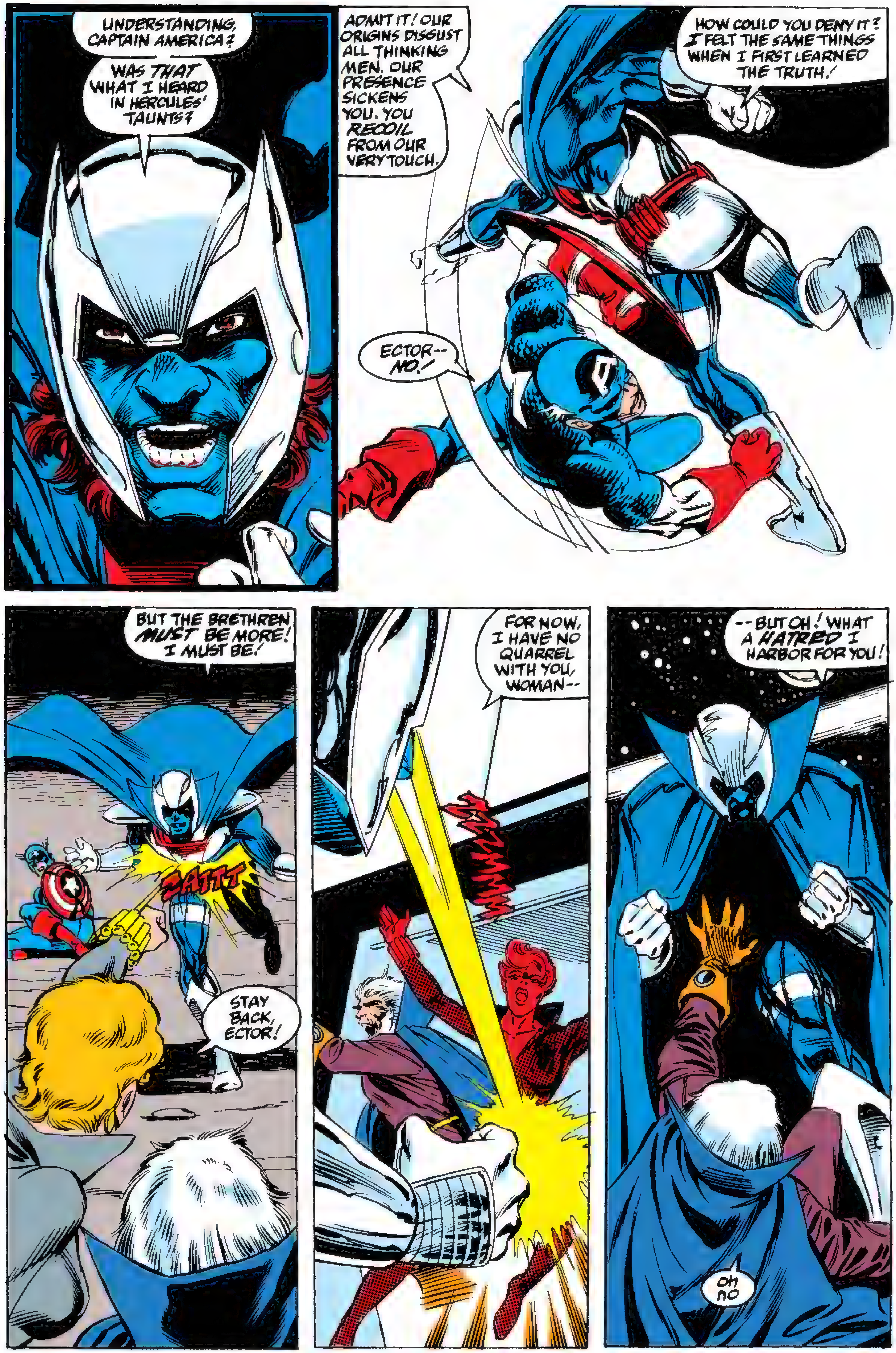

PRIORITY ALARM ONE ALPHA!
JARVIS HAS SOUNDED OUR HIGHEST ALERT!
EVERYONE, TO THE CONFERENCE ROOM! AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
M-MASTER CAP, IT STARTED ONLY MOMENTS AGO.
THEY CAME FLYING OUT OF THE BRETHREN'S CITADEL. EVEN THE SKY HAS DARKENED WITH THEIR NUMBER!
MY GOD-- THERE MUST BE MILLIONS OF THEM!
BASE PERFIDY HATH TAKEN PLACE, AVENGERS!
OLAR IS SLAIN AND SOME OF OUR NUMBER WOUNDED BY AN UNKNOWN ASSAILANT!
NOW WHAT?!
THOOOM
SHOCK-WAVES!

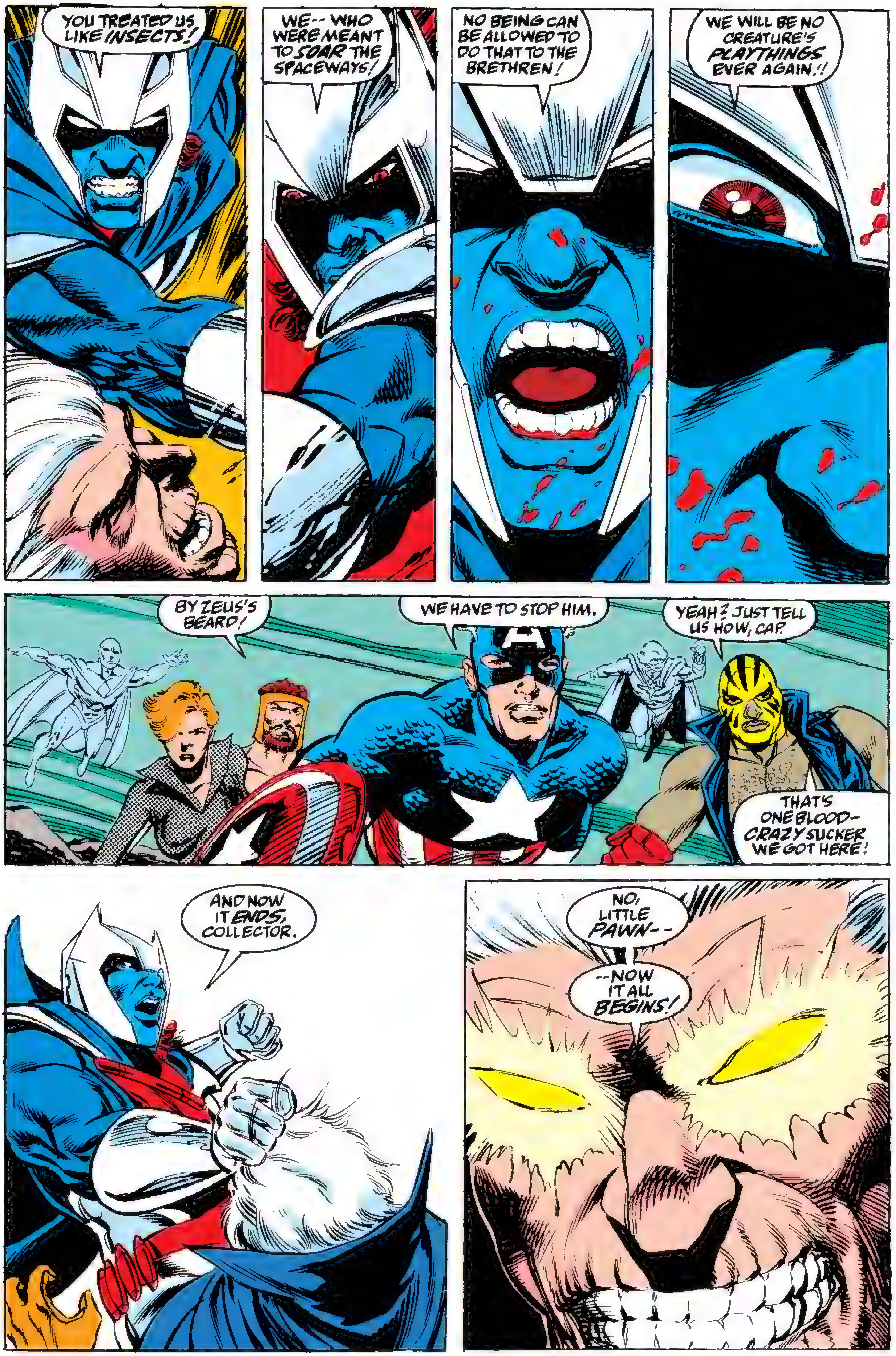

COME OUT OF YOUR FORTRESS, AVENGERS! AND BRING THE CURSED COLLECTOR WITH YOU!
COME OUT AND FACE THE RIGHTEOUS WRATH OF A PEOPLE ENSLAVED! OR DO YOU HIDE IN TERROR, *TREMBLING* BEFORE OUR ASSEMBLED MIGHT?
DO YOU HEAR ME?!
THOOM
WE HEAR YOU, ECTOR--
--AND, BY THE WAY, THE *AVENGERS* FEAR NO ONE.
DEAR ME, HE DOES HATE ME *SO!*
HEY, WE TOLD YOU TO *STAY* INDOORS.
SO... HE *IS* WITH YOU.
THEN YOU MUST *DIE* WITH HIM.

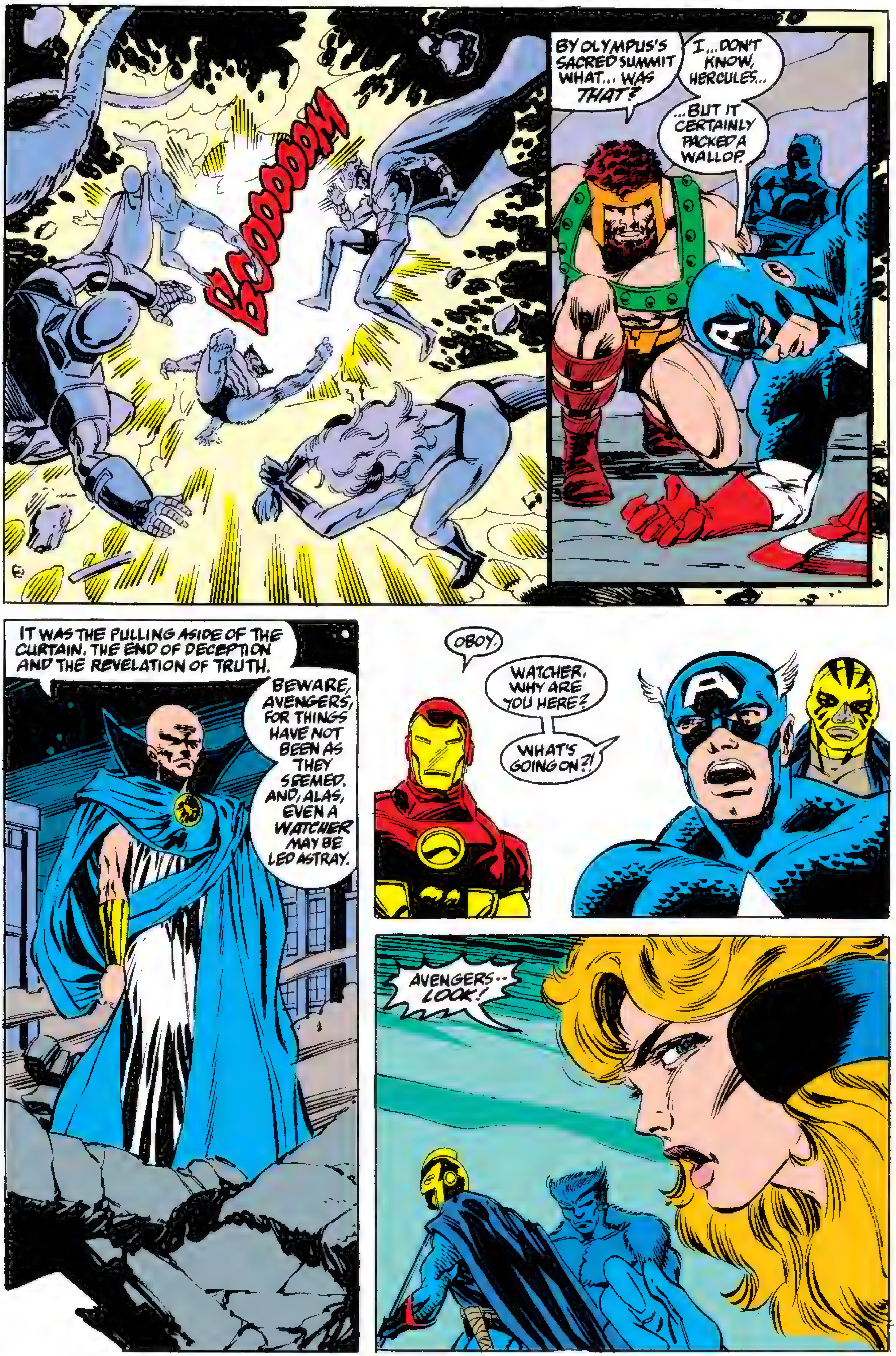

I SAY THEE MOST ASSUREDLY NAY, CREATURE OF GERM AND THINGS MOST FOUL!
YOU SEEK TO INSULT ME?
IS THAT HOW ONE WARRIOR TREATS ANOTHER?
BAM
YOU ARE NO WARRIOR!
POW
FOR THE AVENGERS HATH UNCOVERED THY SECRET SHAME!
HAVE THEY, HERCULES?
YOU TREAT ME WITH NAKED DISGUST AND CONTEMPT, LITTLE GODLING--
--BUT KNOW THIS--
--THANE ECTOR IS A WARRIOR BORN!
ZZZZZZAMMM
AGGGHHH


AND NO MAN NOR WOMAN SHALL STAY HIS RIGHTEOUS VENGEANCE!!
RIPPPPP
LADS, I THINK WE'RE IN SOME TROUBLE!
YOU SAID A MOUTHFUL, BEAST.
CRUUUNKK
I HAD ALMOST COME TO ADMIRE YOU AVENGERS.
-- BUT AT LAST THE SCALES HAVE FALLEN FROM MY EYES --
-- AND I SEE YOU FOR THE BASE CREATURES YOU ARE!
THAT CONCRETE BLOCK MUST WEIGH TONS...
... MY REPULSOR RAYS CAN HANDLE IT EASILY ENOUGH...
...WISH I COULD SAY THE SAME FOR THANE ECTOR!


FASCINATING.
AS THANE ECTOR'S FURY GROWS, THE BRETHREN BECOME MORE FRENZIED IN BATTLE. ONE CAN INFER A SUGGESTION OF GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS.
CRYSTAL, DO YOU NEED ANY ASSISTANCE?
NOT YET, VISION.
BUT YOU'LL BE THE *FIRST* TO KNOW, IF THAT CHANGES.
OH, DEAR, THINGS ARE GETTING A *BIT* OUT OF HAND, AREN'T THEY?
YOU'RE A MASTER OF UNDERSTATEMENT.
TAKE COVER BEHIND ME, MAYBE MY WIDOW'S STING WILL SLOW ECTOR DOWN.
KLIK
SO NOW YOU HIDE AMONG THE SKIRTS OF WOMEN, COLLECTOR?
SHE SHALL NOT SAVE YOUR LIFE, LITTLE MAN! FOR I *WILL* HAVE YOUR HEAD!
I DON'T THINK SO, ECTOR.
I KNOW HE HAS HURT YOUR PEOPLE, BUT HIS DEATH WON'T SOLVE ANYTHING. IT WON'T REDEEM THOSE YEARS YOU SPENT IMPRISONED.
WE KNOW A LITTLE MORE ABOUT YOUR PEOPLE. IT'S TIME FOR THE KILLING TO END. THERE'S A *CHANCE* FOR UNDERSTANDING NOW.


UNDERSTANDING, CAPTAIN AMERICA?
WAS *THAT* WHAT I HEARD IN HERCULES' TAUNTS?
ADMIT IT! OUR ORIGINS DISGUST ALL THINKING MEN. OUR PRESENCE SICKENS YOU. YOU *RECOIL* FROM OUR VERY TOUCH.
HOW COULD YOU DENY IT? *I* FELT THE SAME THINGS WHEN I FIRST LEARNED THE TRUTH!
ECTOR-- *NO!*
BUT THE BRETHREN *MUST* BE MORE! I MUST BE!
ZATTT
STAY BACK, ECTOR!
FOR NOW, I HAVE NO QUARREL WITH YOU, WOMAN--
ZZZMMM
--BUT OH! WHAT A *HATRED* I HARBOR FOR YOU!
oh no

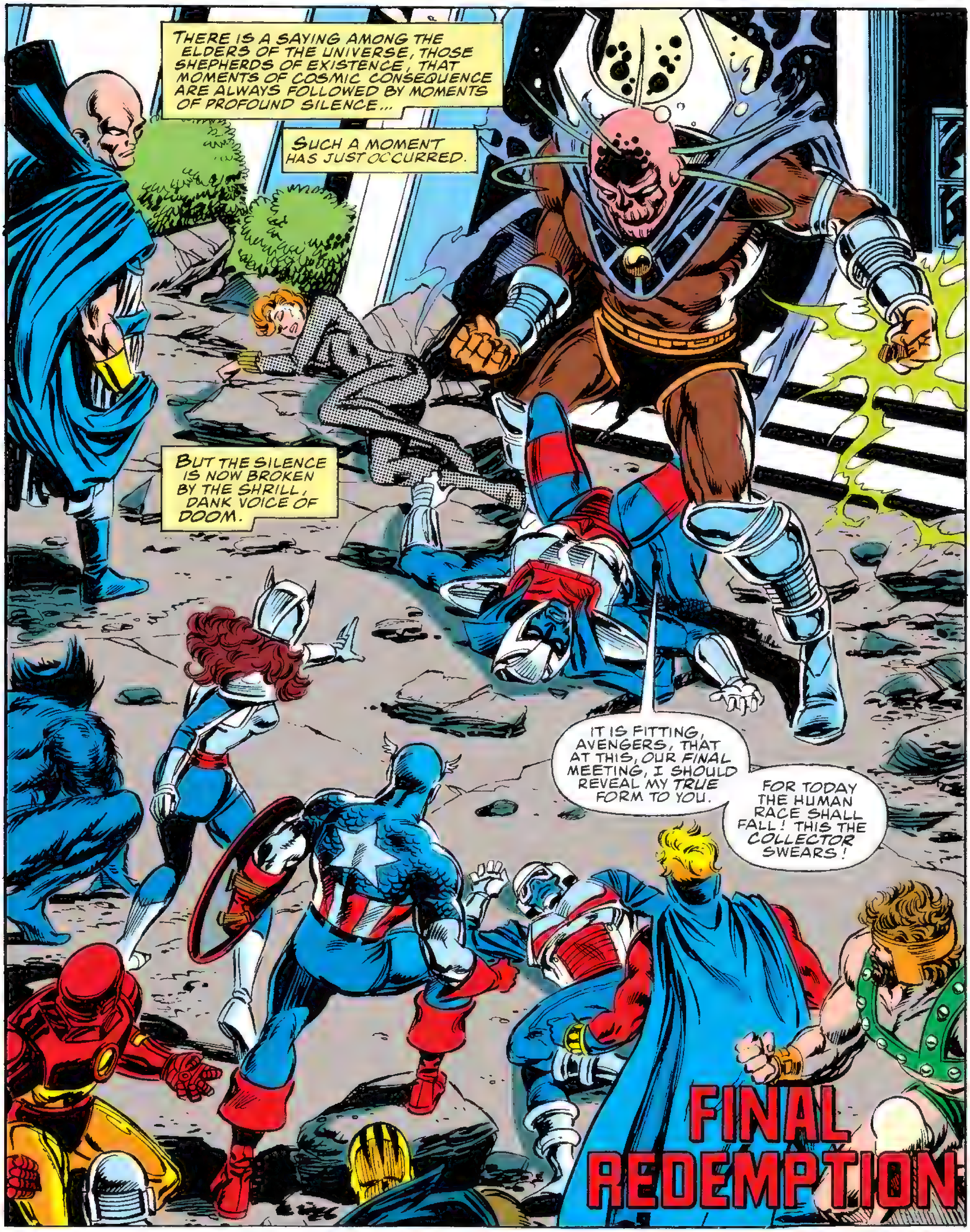

YOU TREATED US LIKE *INSECTS*!
WE-- WHO WERE MEANT TO *SOAR* THE SPACEWAYS!
NO BEING CAN BE ALLOWED TO DO THAT TO THE BRETHREN!
WE WILL BE NO CREATURE'S *PLAYTHINGS* EVER AGAIN!!
BY ZEUS'S BEARD!
WE HAVE TO STOP HIM.
YEAH? JUST TELL US HOW, CAP.
THAT'S ONE BLOOD-CRAZY SUCKER WE GOT HERE!
AND NOW IT *ENDS*, COLLECTOR.
NO, LITTLE *PAWN*--
--NOW IT ALL *BEGINS*!


BOOOOOOM
BY OLYMPUS'S SACRED SUMMIT WHAT... WAS *THAT*?
I...DON'T KNOW, HERCULES...
...BUT IT CERTAINLY PACKED A WALLOP.
IT WAS THE PULLING ASIDE OF THE CURTAIN. THE END OF DECEPTION AND THE REVELATION OF TRUTH.
BEWARE, AVENGERS, FOR THINGS HAVE NOT BEEN AS THEY SEEMED. AND, ALAS, EVEN A *WATCHER* MAY BE LED ASTRAY.
OBOY.
WATCHER, WHY ARE YOU HERE?
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
AVENGERS.. *LOOK!*

YES, FOOLS, LOOK--AND WONDER!
DUPES YOU WERE, AND DUPES YOU REMAIN, AVENGERS! DID YOU TRULY THINK ME DEFEATED? DID YOU TRULY BELIEVE ME A SIMPLETON?
KNOW THIS NOW-- IT WAS I WHO ALLOWED THE BRETHREN TO ESCAPE. IT WAS I WHO BROUGHT THEM TO THIS WORLD. I ARRANGED IT ALL!
FOR THE HUMAN RACE MUST DIE THIS DAY! SO SWEARS THE COLLECTOR!
NEXT: THE REASON WHY!

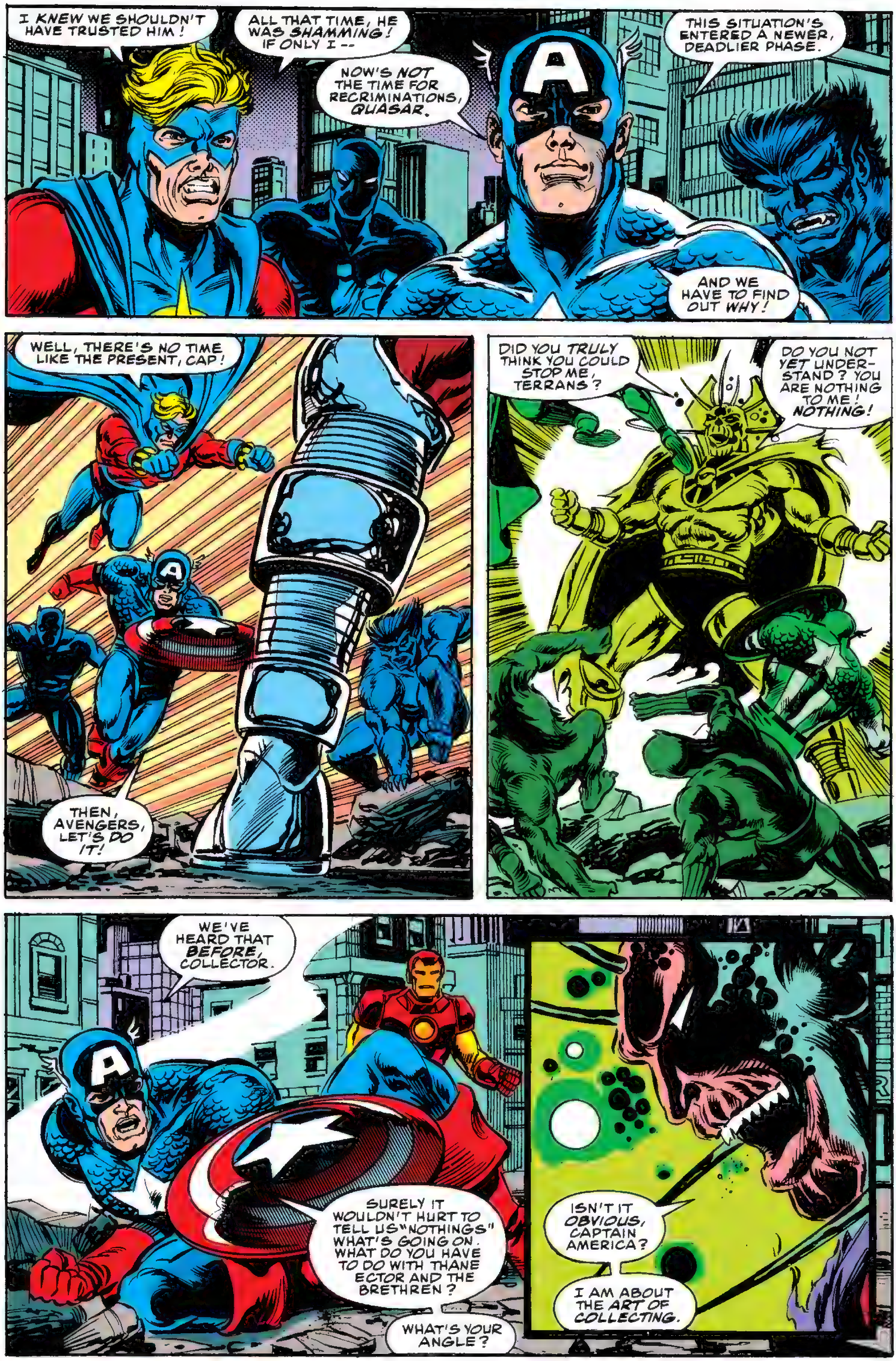
MARVEL COMICS
THE COLLECTION OBSESSION PART 6
AVENGERS
© 1991 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
TM
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN/UK 65p
339
EARLY OCT
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IN THE CLUTCHES OF THE COLLECTOR!

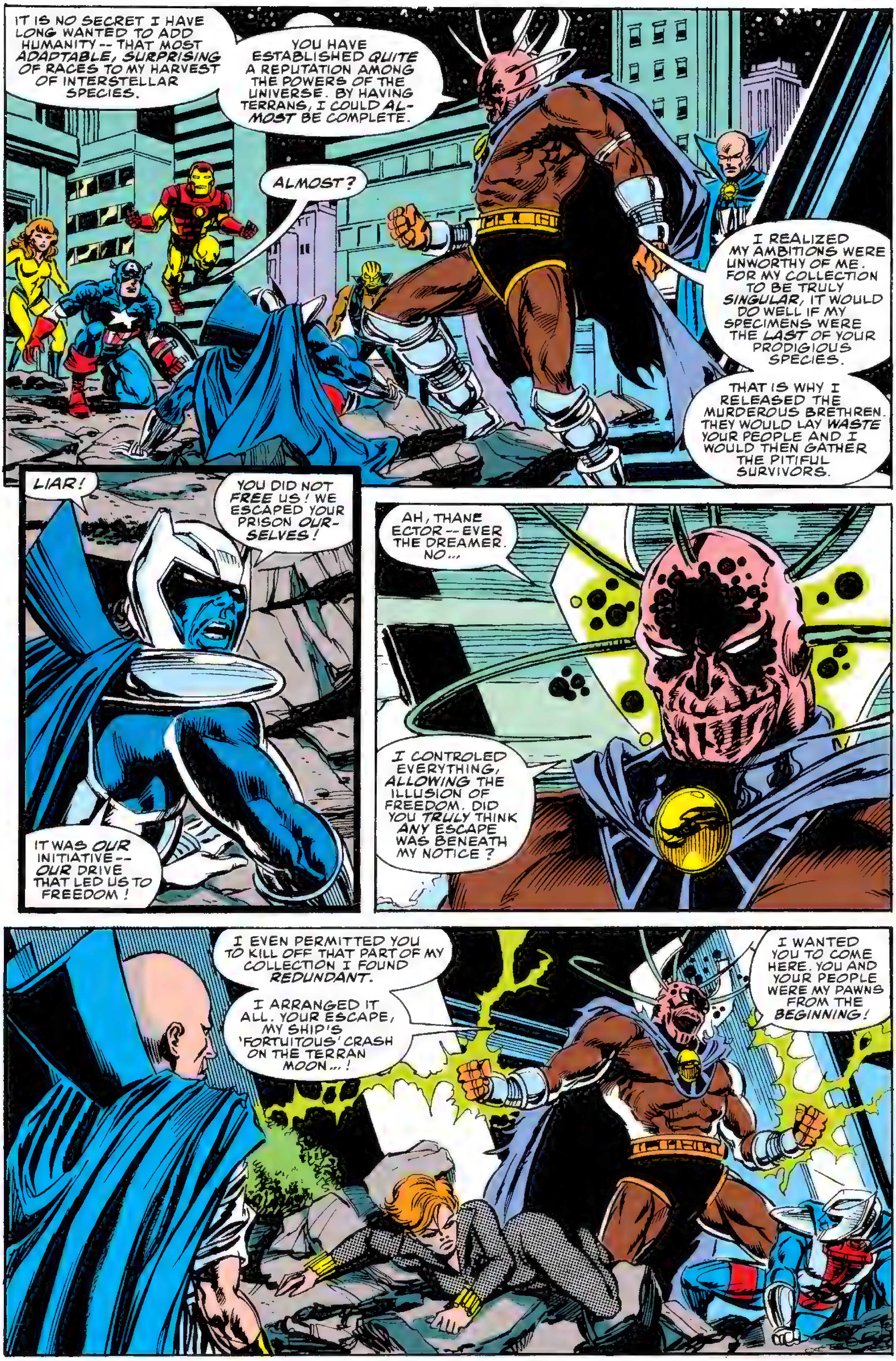
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND! STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

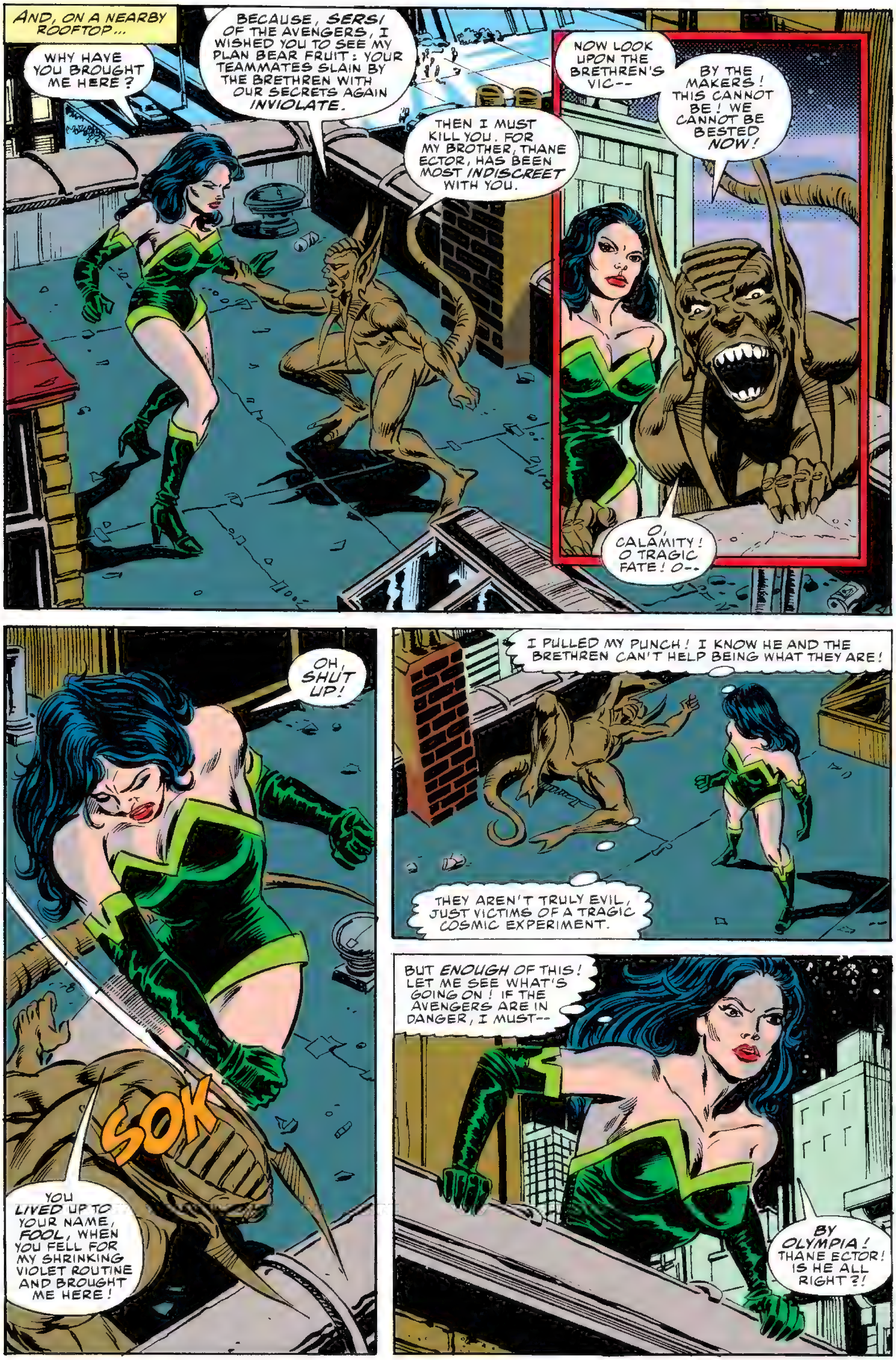

THERE IS A SAYING AMONG THE ELDERS OF THE UNIVERSE, THOSE SHEPHERDS OF EXISTENCE, THAT MOMENTS OF COSMIC CONSEQUENCE ARE ALWAYS FOLLOWED BY MOMENTS OF PROFOUND SILENCE...
SUCH A MOMENT HAS JUST OCCURRED.
BUT THE SILENCE IS NOW BROKEN BY THE SHRILL, DANK VOICE OF DOOM.
IT IS FITTING, AVENGERS, THAT AT THIS, OUR FINAL MEETING, I SHOULD REVEAL MY TRUE FORM TO YOU.
FOR TODAY THE HUMAN RACE SHALL FALL! THIS THE COLLECTOR SWEARS!

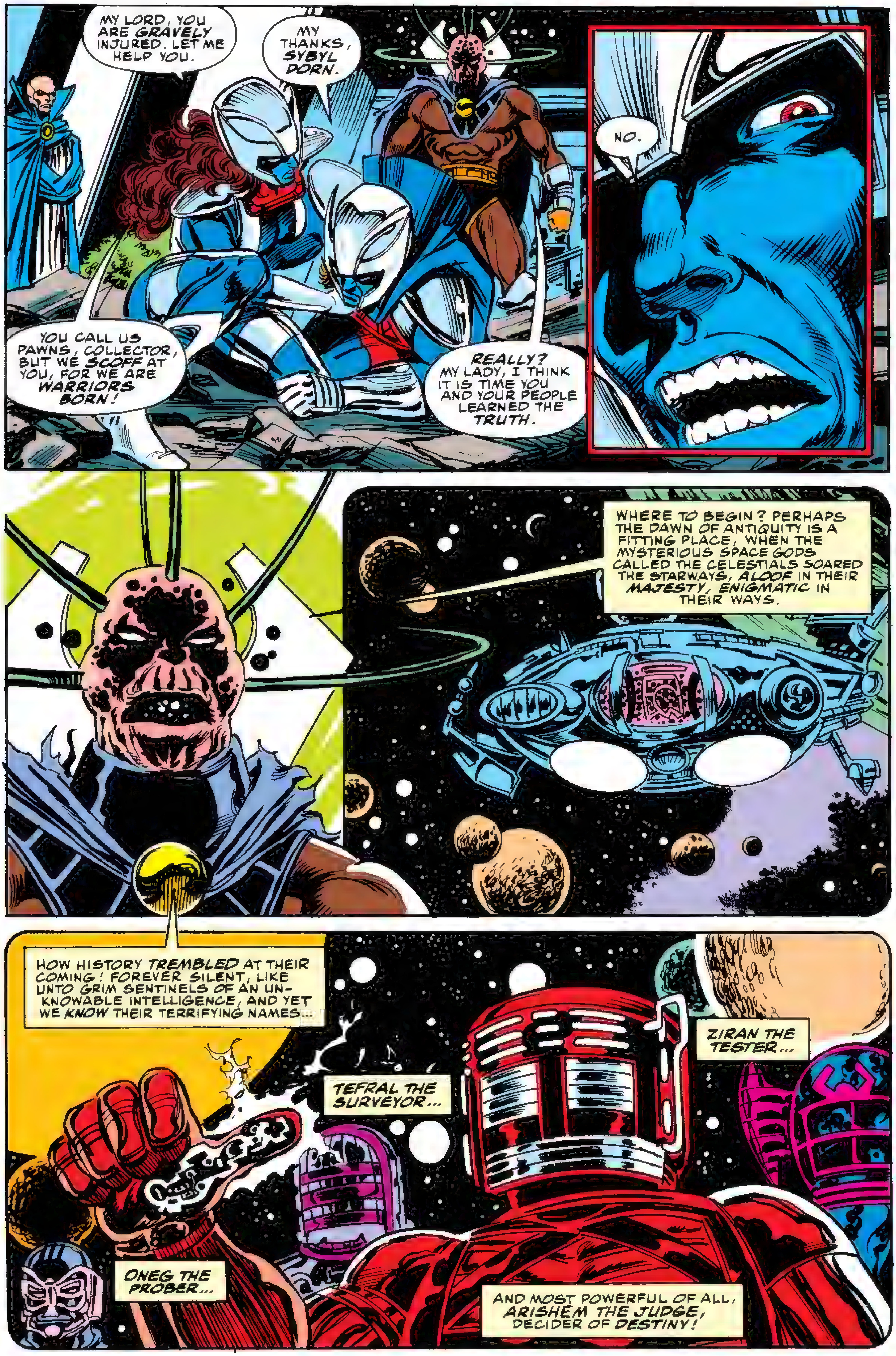
FINAL REDEMPTION

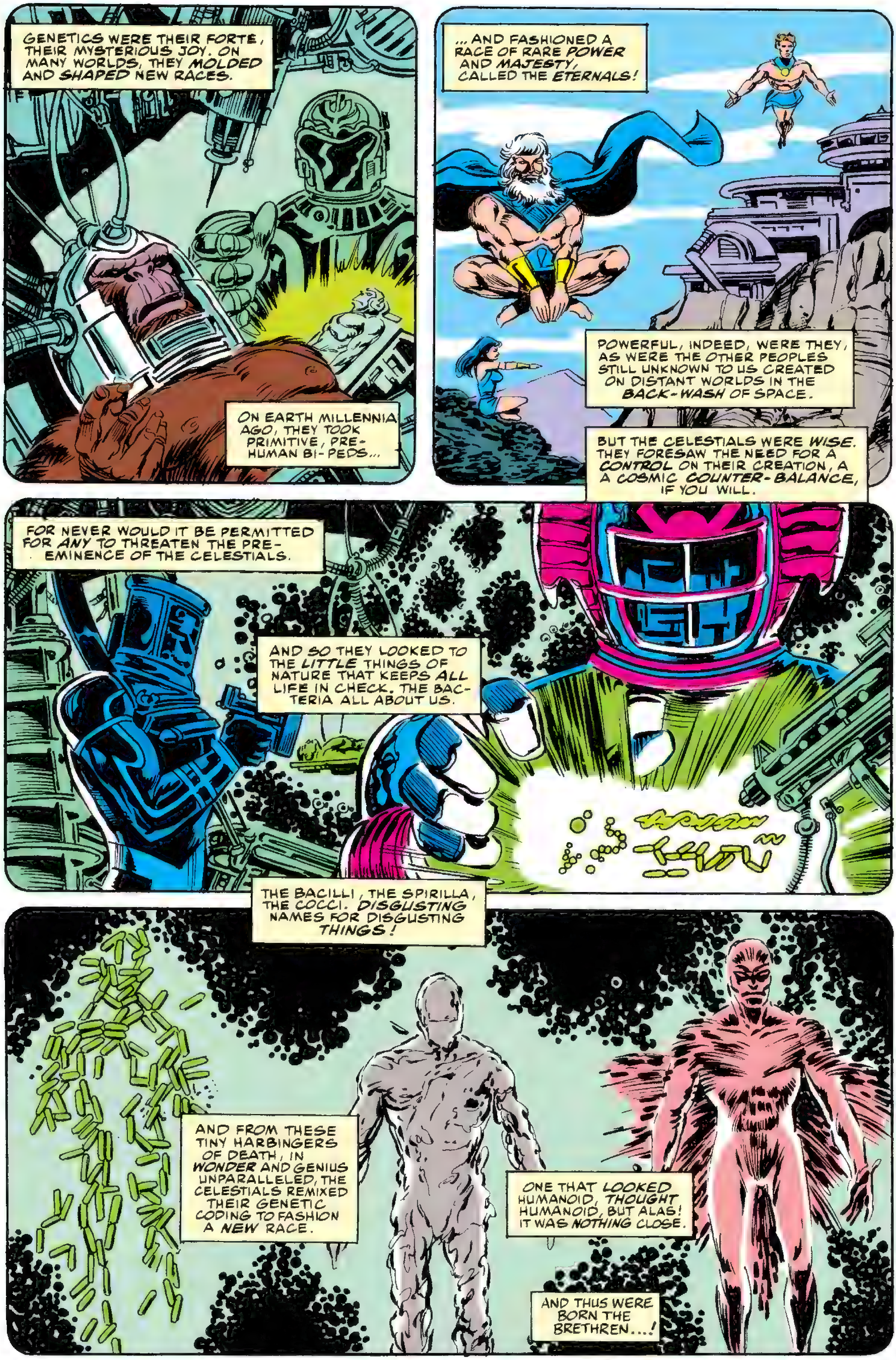
A TALE OF LOSS AND ENDINGS BY • BOB HARRAS WRITER • STEVE EPTING PENCILER • TOM PALMER INKER • BILL OAKLEY LETTERER • TINSLEY, MOSSOFF SCOTT 3 SKOLNIK' COLORISTS • RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR • TOM DEFALCO ED. IN CHIEF

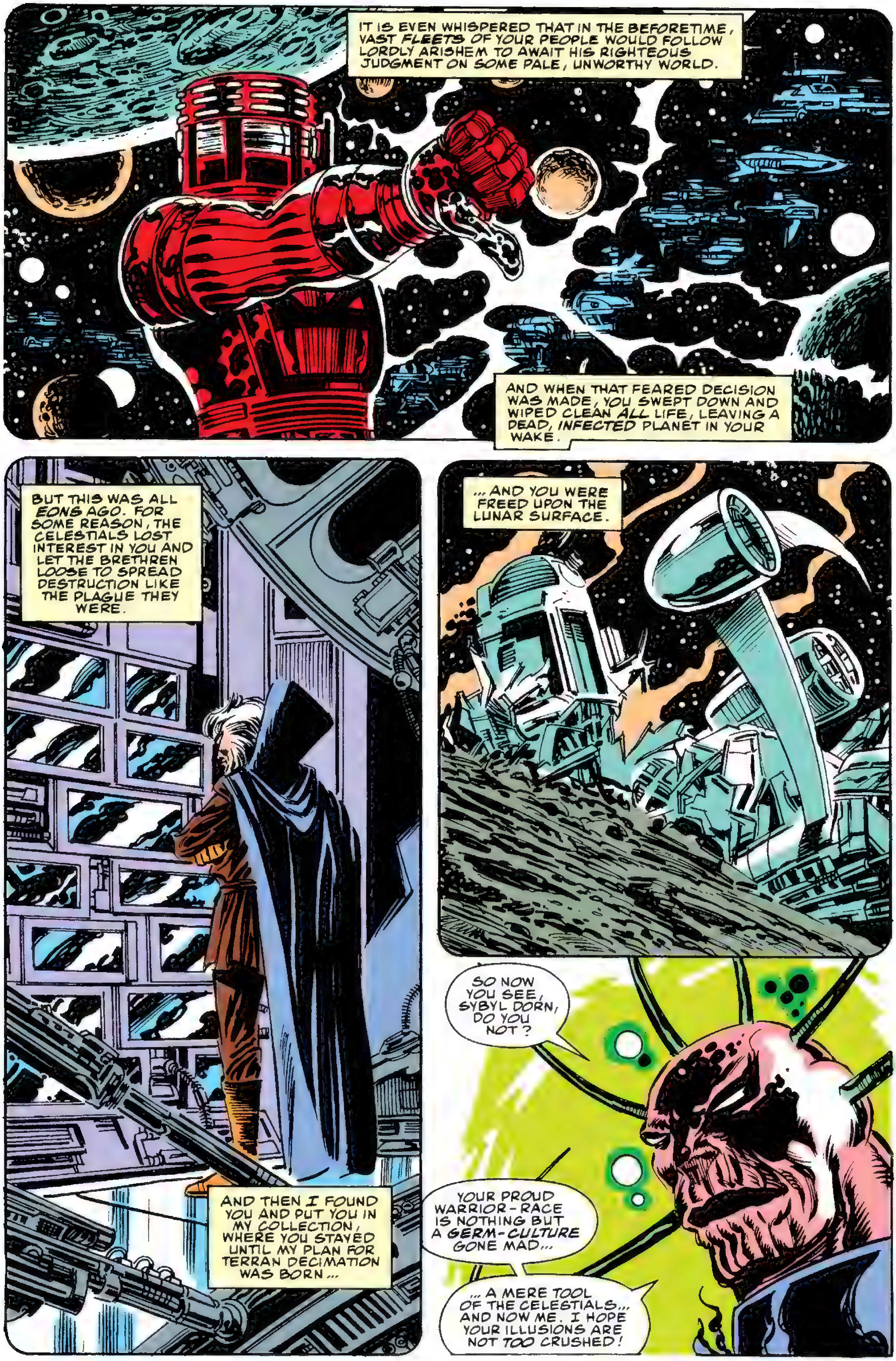

I KNEW WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TRUSTED HIM!
ALL THAT TIME, HE WAS SHAMMING! IF ONLY I --
NOW'S NOT THE TIME FOR RECRIMINATIONS, QUASAR.
THIS SITUATION'S ENTERED A NEWER, DEADLIER PHASE.
AND WE HAVE TO FIND OUT WHY!
WELL, THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT, CAP!
THEN, AVENGERS, LET'S DO IT!
DID YOU TRULY THINK YOU COULD STOP ME, TERRANS?
DO YOU NOT YET UNDERSTAND? YOU ARE NOTHING TO ME! NOTHING!
WE'VE HEARD THAT BEFORE, COLLECTOR.
SURELY IT WOULDN'T HURT TO TELL US "NOTHINGS" WHAT'S GOING ON. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO WITH THANE ECTOR AND THE BRETHREN?
WHAT'S YOUR ANGLE?
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS, CAPTAIN AMERICA?
I AM ABOUT THE ART OF COLLECTING.

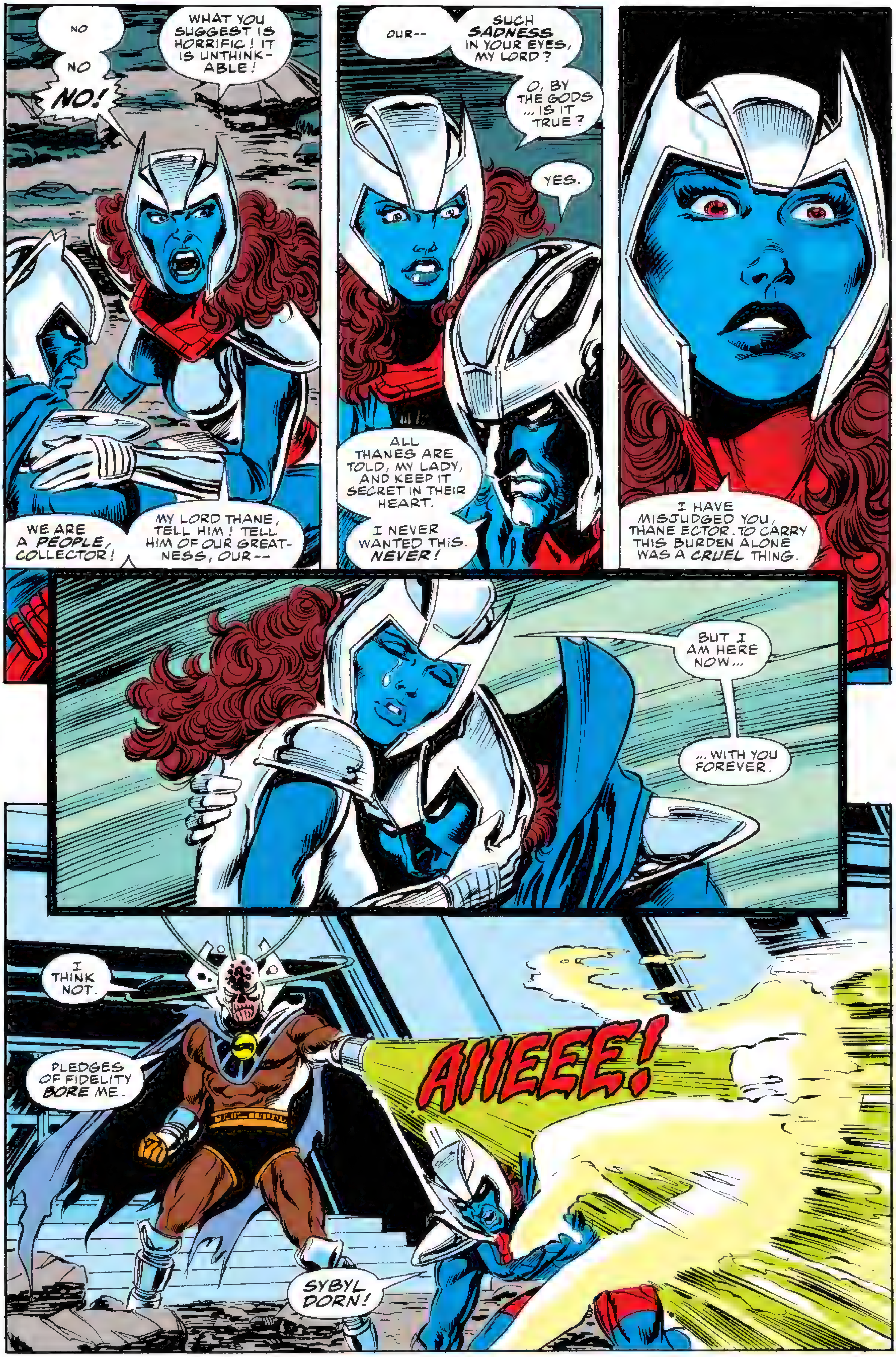

IT IS NO SECRET I HAVE LONG WANTED TO ADD HUMANITY -- THAT MOST *ADAPTABLE, SURPRISING* OF RACES TO MY HARVEST OF INTERSTELLAR SPECIES.
YOU HAVE ESTABLISHED *QUITE* A REPUTATION AMONG THE POWERS OF THE UNIVERSE. BY HAVING TERRANS, I COULD *ALMOST* BE COMPLETE.
ALMOST?
I REALIZED MY AMBITIONS WERE UNWORTHY OF ME. FOR MY COLLECTION TO BE TRULY *SINGULAR*, IT WOULD DO WELL IF MY SPECIMENS WERE THE *LAST* OF YOUR PRODIGIOUS SPECIES.
THAT IS WHY I RELEASED THE MURDEROUS BRETHREN. THEY WOULD LAY *WASTE* YOUR PEOPLE AND I WOULD THEN GATHER THE PITIFUL SURVIVORS.
LIAR!
YOU DID NOT *FREE* US! WE ESCAPED YOUR PRISON *OURSELVES*!
IT WAS *OUR* INITIATIVE -- *OUR* DRIVE THAT LED US TO FREEDOM!
AH, THANE ECTOR -- EVER THE DREAMER. NO...
I CONTROLED EVERYTHING, *ALLOWING* THE ILLUSION OF FREEDOM. DID YOU *TRULY* THINK *ANY* ESCAPE WAS BENEATH MY NOTICE?
I EVEN PERMITTED YOU TO KILL OFF THAT PART OF MY COLLECTION I FOUND *REDUNDANT*.
I ARRANGED IT ALL. YOUR ESCAPE, MY SHIP'S 'FORTUITOUS' CRASH ON THE TERRAN MOON...!
I WANTED YOU TO COME HERE. YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE WERE MY PAWNS FROM THE *BEGINNING*!

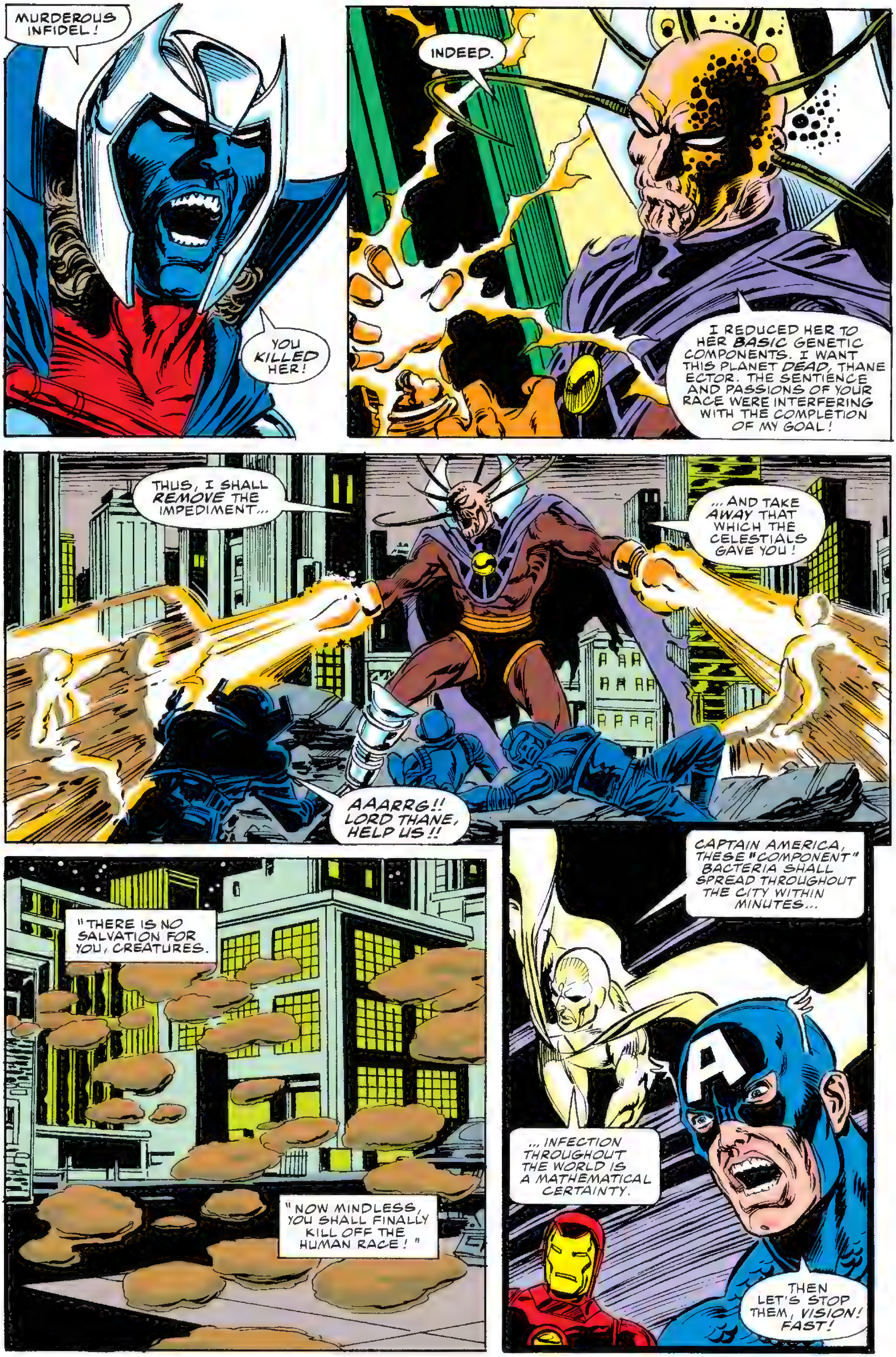

AND, ON A NEARBY ROOFTOP...
WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT ME HERE?
BECAUSE, SERSI OF THE AVENGERS, I WISHED YOU TO SEE MY PLAN BEAR FRUIT: YOUR TEAMMATES SLAIN BY THE BRETHREN WITH OUR SECRETS AGAIN INVIOLATE.
THEN I MUST KILL YOU. FOR MY BROTHER, THANE ECTOR, HAS BEEN MOST INDISCREET WITH YOU.
NOW LOOK UPON THE BRETHREN'S VIC--
BY THE MAKERS! THIS CANNOT BE! WE CANNOT BE BESTED NOW!
O, CALAMITY! O TRAGIC FATE! O--
OH, SHUT UP!
SOK
YOU LIVED UP TO YOUR NAME, FOOL, WHEN YOU FELL FOR MY SHRINKING VIOLET ROUTINE AND BROUGHT ME HERE!
I PULLED MY PUNCH! I KNOW HE AND THE BRETHREN CAN'T HELP BEING WHAT THEY ARE!
THEY AREN'T TRULY EVIL, JUST VICTIMS OF A TRAGIC COSMIC EXPERIMENT.
BUT ENOUGH OF THIS! LET ME SEE WHAT'S GOING ON! IF THE AVENGERS ARE IN DANGER, I MUST--
BY OLYMPIA! THANE ECTOR! IS HE ALL RIGHT?!

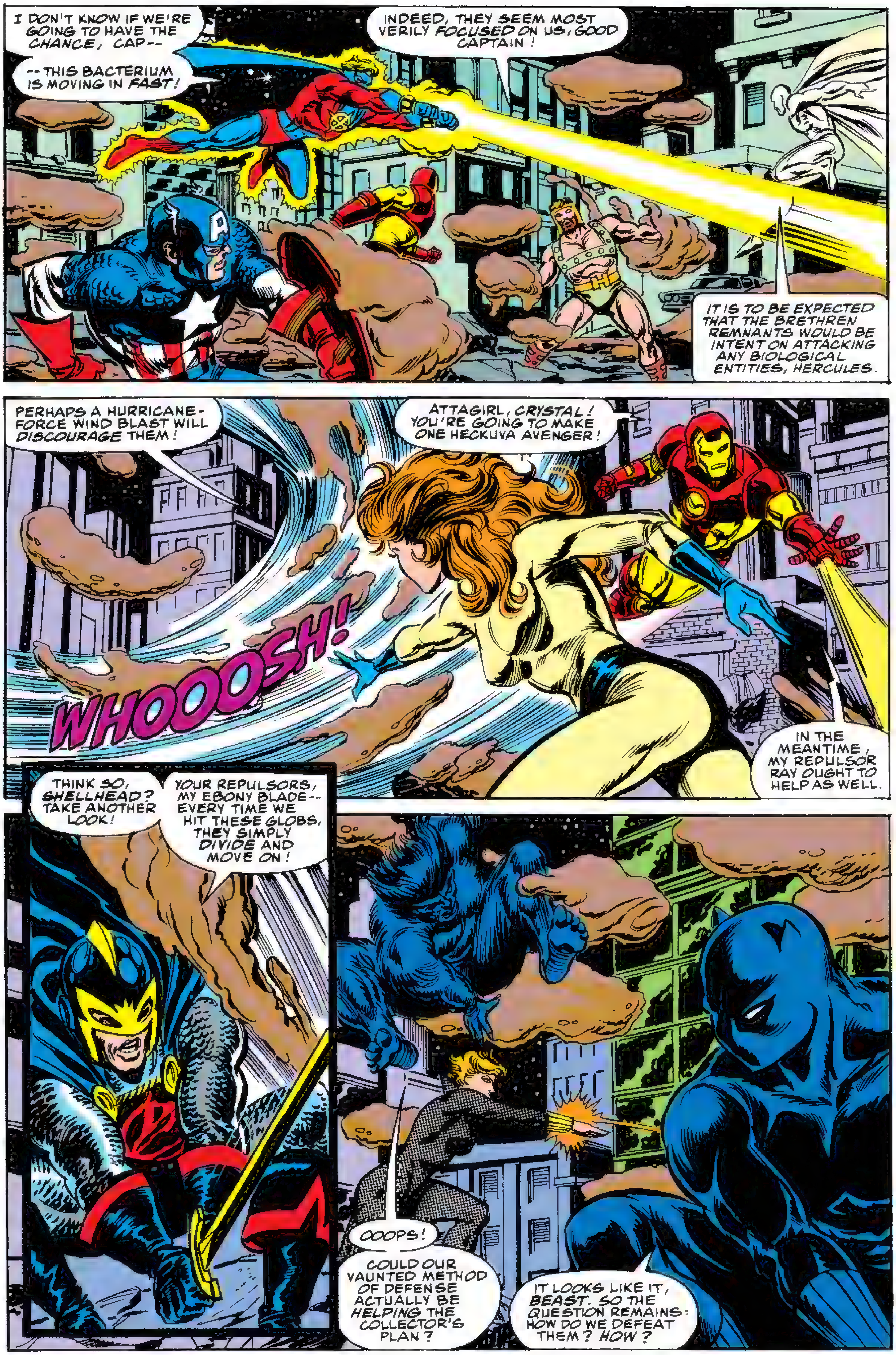

MY LORD, YOU ARE *GRAVELY* INJURED. LET ME HELP YOU.
MY THANKS, *SYBYL DORN*.
YOU CALL US PAWNS, COLLECTOR, BUT WE *SCOFF* AT YOU, FOR WE ARE *WARRIORS BORN!*
REALLY? MY LADY, I THINK IT IS TIME YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE LEARNED THE *TRUTH*.
NO.
WHERE TO BEGIN? PERHAPS THE DAWN OF ANTIQUITY IS A FITTING PLACE, WHEN THE MYSTERIOUS SPACE GODS CALLED THE CELESTIALS SOARED THE STARWAYS, *ALOOF* IN THEIR *MAJESTY*, *ENIGMATIC* IN THEIR WAYS.
HOW HISTORY *TREMBLED* AT THEIR COMING! FOREVER SILENT, LIKE UNTO GRIM SENTINELS OF AN UNKNOWABLE INTELLIGENCE, AND YET WE *KNOW* THEIR TERRIFYING NAMES...
TEFRAL THE SURVEYOR...
ZIRAN THE TESTER...
ONEG THE PROBER...
AND MOST POWERFUL OF ALL, *ARISHEM THE JUDGE*, DECIDER OF *DESTINY!*

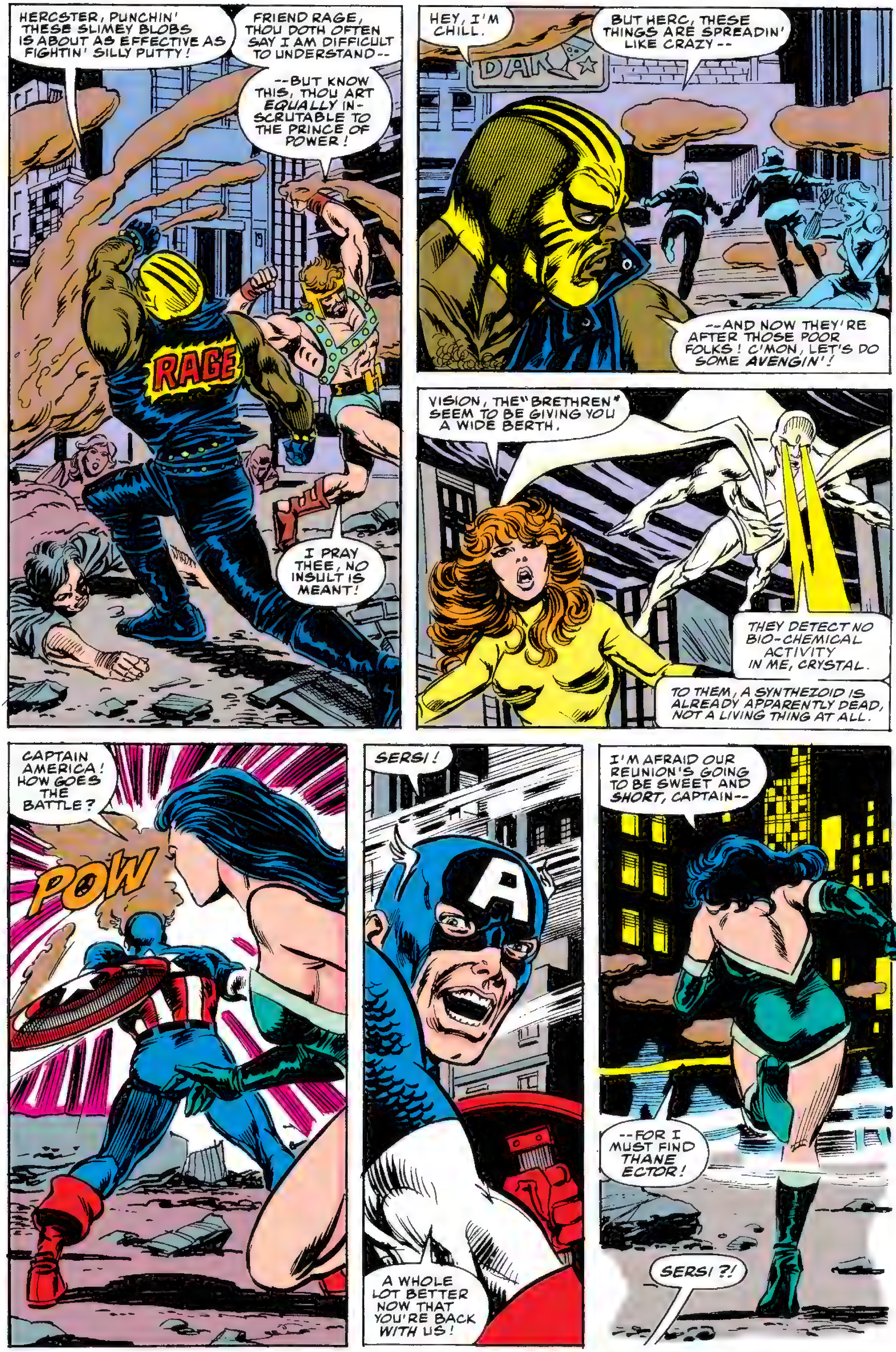

GENETICS WERE THEIR FORTE, THEIR MYSTERIOUS JOY. ON MANY WORLDS, THEY MOLDED AND SHAPED NEW RACES.
ON EARTH MILLENNIA AGO, THEY TOOK PRIMITIVE, PRE-HUMAN BI-PEDS...
...AND FASHIONED A RACE OF RARE POWER AND MAJESTY, CALLED THE ETERNALS!
POWERFUL, INDEED, WERE THEY, AS WERE THE OTHER PEOPLES STILL UNKNOWN TO US CREATED ON DISTANT WORLDS IN THE BACK-WASH OF SPACE.
BUT THE CELESTIALS WERE WISE. THEY FORESAW THE NEED FOR A CONTROL ON THEIR CREATION, A A COSMIC COUNTER-BALANCE, IF YOU WILL.
FOR NEVER WOULD IT BE PERMITTED FOR ANY TO THREATEN THE PRE-EMINENCE OF THE CELESTIALS.
AND SO THEY LOOKED TO THE LITTLE THINGS OF NATURE THAT KEEPS ALL LIFE IN CHECK. THE BACTERIA ALL ABOUT US.
THE BACILLI, THE SPIRILLA, THE COCCI. DISGUSTING NAMES FOR DISGUSTING THINGS!
AND FROM THESE TINY HARBINGERS OF DEATH, IN WONDER AND GENIUS UNPARALLELED, THE CELESTIALS REMIXED THEIR GENETIC CODING TO FASHION A NEW RACE.
ONE THAT LOOKED HUMANOID, THOUGHT HUMANOID, BUT ALAS! IT WAS NOTHING CLOSE.
AND THUS WERE BORN THE BRETHREN...!

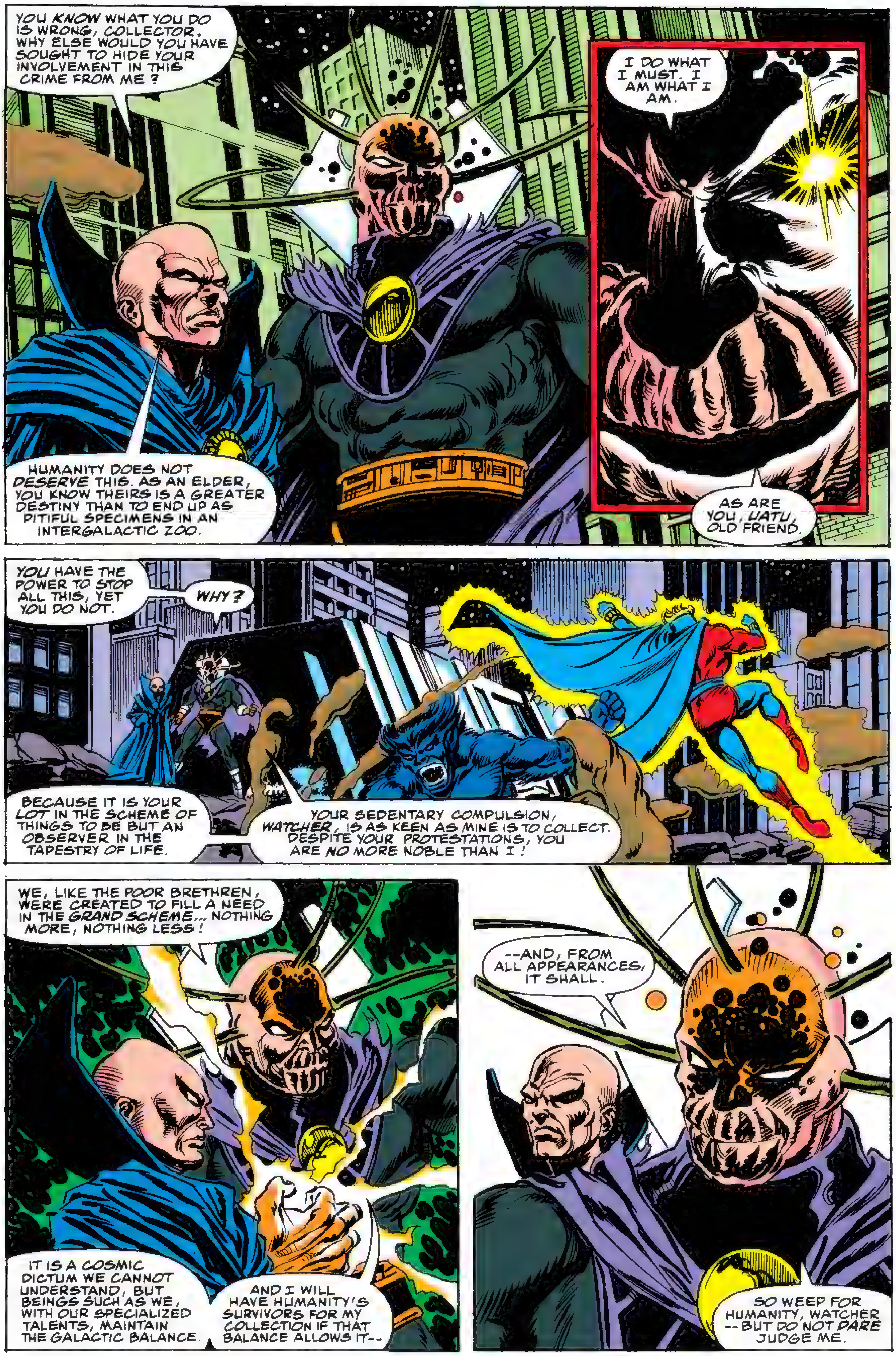

IT IS EVEN WHISPERED THAT IN THE BEFORETIME, VAST *FLEETS* OF YOUR PEOPLE WOULD FOLLOW LORDLY ARISHEM TO AWAIT HIS RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT ON *SOME* PALE, UNWORTHY WORLD.
AND WHEN THAT FEARED DECISION WAS MADE, YOU SWEPT DOWN AND WIPED CLEAN *ALL* LIFE, LEAVING A DEAD, *INFECTED* PLANET IN YOUR WAKE.
BUT THIS WAS ALL *EONS* AGO. FOR SOME REASON, THE CELESTIALS LOST INTEREST IN YOU AND LET THE BRETHREN LOOSE TO SPREAD DESTRUCTION LIKE THE PLAGUE THEY WERE.
AND THEN *I* FOUND YOU AND PUT YOU IN MY COLLECTION, WHERE YOU STAYED UNTIL MY PLAN FOR TERRAN DECIMATION WAS BORN...
...AND YOU WERE FREED UPON THE LUNAR SURFACE.
SO NOW YOU SEE, SYBYL DORN, DO YOU NOT?
YOUR PROUD WARRIOR-RACE IS NOTHING BUT A *GERM-CULTURE* GONE MAD...
...A MERE TOOL OF THE CELESTIALS... AND NOW ME. *I* HOPE YOUR ILLUSIONS ARE NOT *TOO* CRUSHED!

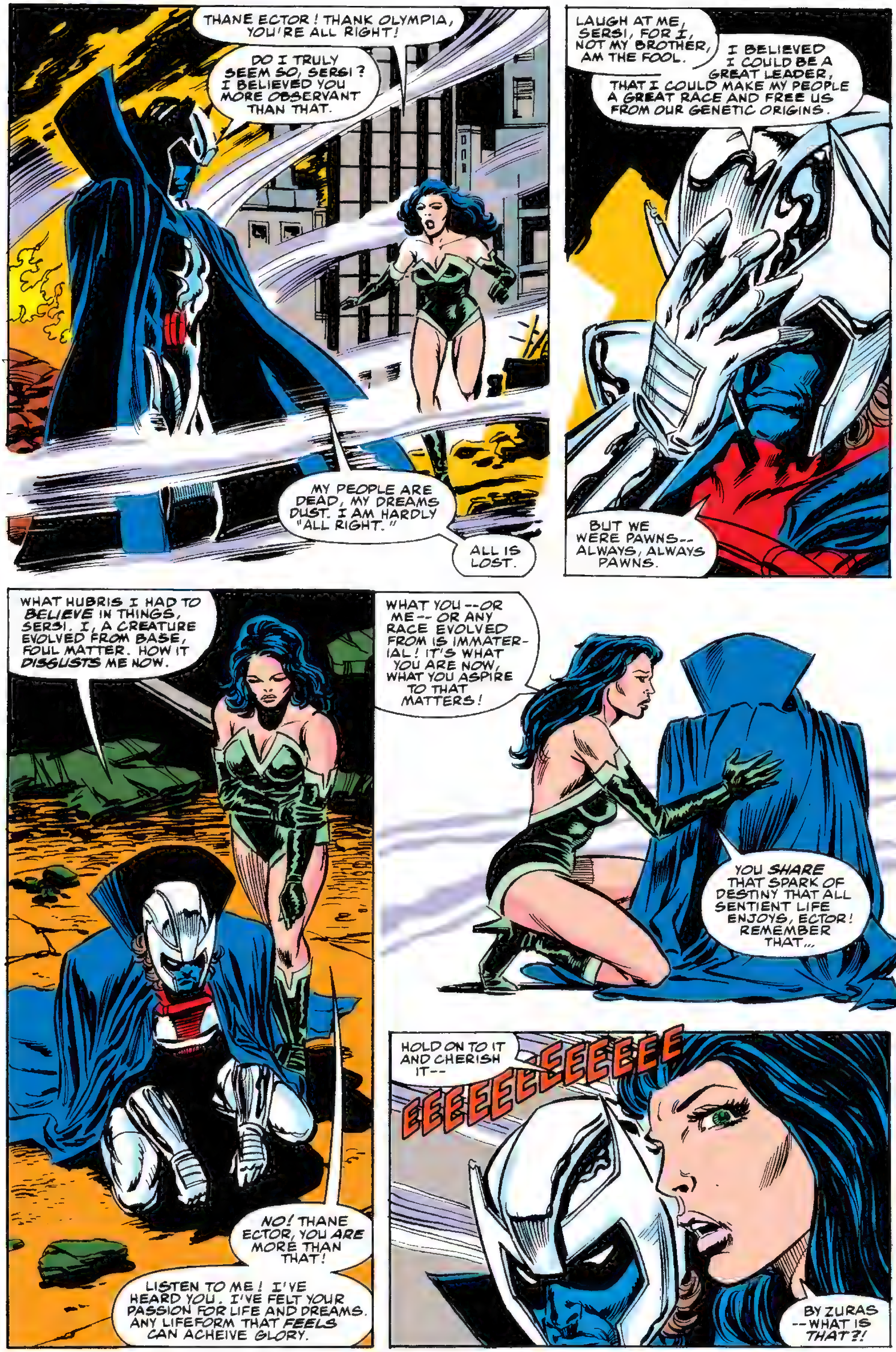

NO
NO
NO!
WHAT YOU SUGGEST IS HORRIFIC! IT IS UNTHINKABLE!
WE ARE A **PEOPLE**, COLLECTOR!
MY LORD THANE, TELL HIM! TELL HIM OF OUR GREATNESS, OUR--
OUR--
SUCH **SADNESS** IN YOUR EYES, MY LORD?
O, BY THE GODS ...IS IT TRUE?
YES.
ALL THANES ARE TOLD, MY LADY, AND KEEP IT SECRET IN THEIR HEART.
I NEVER WANTED THIS. **NEVER!**
I HAVE MISJUDGED YOU, THANE ECTOR. TO CARRY THIS BURDEN ALONE WAS A **CRUEL** THING.
BUT I AM HERE NOW...
...WITH YOU FOREVER.
I THINK NOT.
PLEDGES OF FIDELITY **BORE** ME.
AIIEEE!
SYBYL DORN!

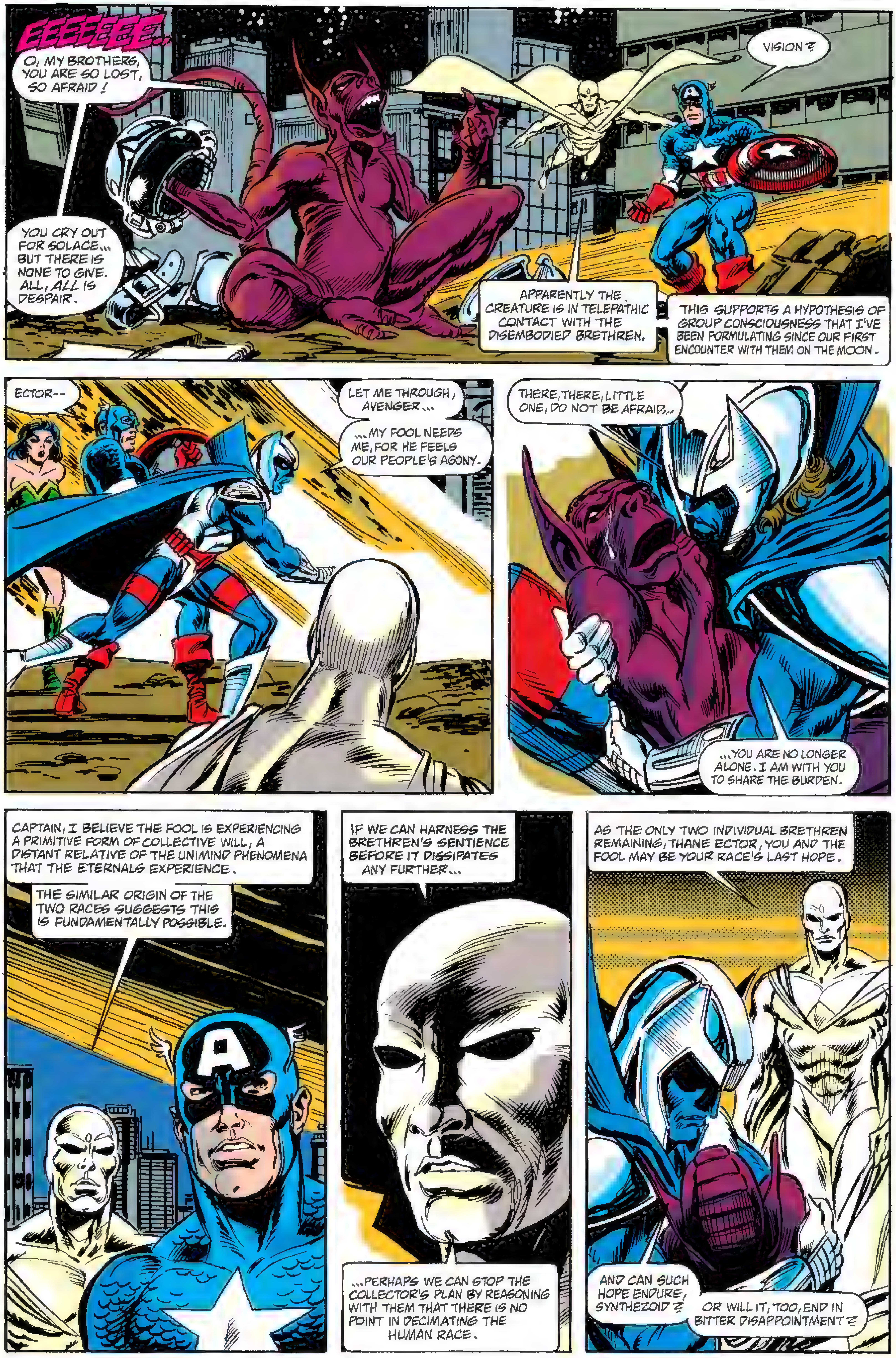

MURDEROUS INFIDEL!
YOU KILLED HER!
INDEED.
I REDUCED HER TO HER *BASIC* GENETIC COMPONENTS. I WANT THIS PLANET *DEAD*, THANE ECTOR. THE SENTIENCE AND PASSIONS OF YOUR RACE WERE INTERFERING WITH THE COMPLETION OF MY GOAL!
THUS, I SHALL *REMOVE* THE IMPEDIMENT...
...AND TAKE *AWAY* THAT WHICH THE CELESTIALS GAVE YOU!
AAARRG!! LORD THANE, HELP US!!
"THERE IS NO SALVATION FOR YOU, CREATURES.
"NOW MINDLESS, YOU SHALL FINALLY KILL OFF THE HUMAN RACE!"
CAPTAIN AMERICA, THESE "COMPONENT" BACTERIA SHALL SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE CITY WITHIN MINUTES...
...INFECTION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD IS A MATHEMATICAL CERTAINTY.
THEN LET'S STOP THEM, *VISION*! *FAST!*

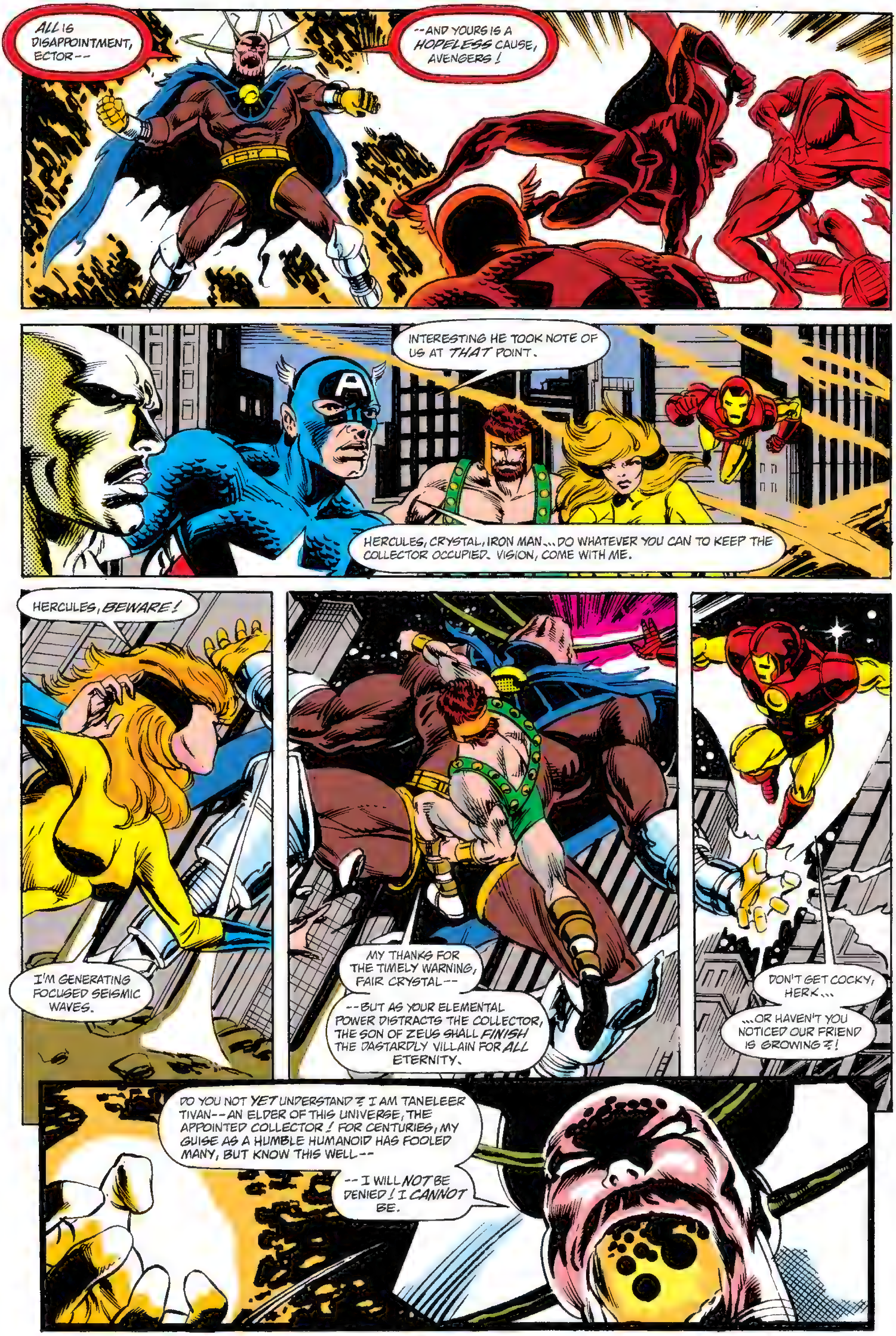

I DON'T KNOW IF WE'RE GOING TO HAVE THE CHANCE, CAP--
--THIS BACTERIUM IS MOVING IN FAST!
INDEED, THEY SEEM MOST VERILY FOCUSED ON US, GOOD CAPTAIN!
IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT THE BRETHREN REMNANTS WOULD BE INTENT ON ATTACKING ANY BIOLOGICAL ENTITIES, HERCULES.
PERHAPS A HURRICANE-FORCE WIND BLAST WILL DISCOURAGE THEM!
ATTAGIRL, CRYSTAL! YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE ONE HECKUVA AVENGER!
WHOOOSH!
IN THE MEANTIME, MY REPULSOR RAY OUGHT TO HELP AS WELL.
THINK SO, SHELLHEAD? TAKE ANOTHER LOOK!
YOUR REPULSORS, MY EBONY BLADE-- EVERY TIME WE HIT THESE GLOBS, THEY SIMPLY DIVIDE AND MOVE ON!
OOOPS!
COULD OUR VAUNTED METHOD OF DEFENSE ACTUALLY BE HELPING THE COLLECTOR'S PLAN?
IT LOOKS LIKE IT, BEAST. SO THE QUESTION REMAINS: HOW DO WE DEFEAT THEM? HOW?

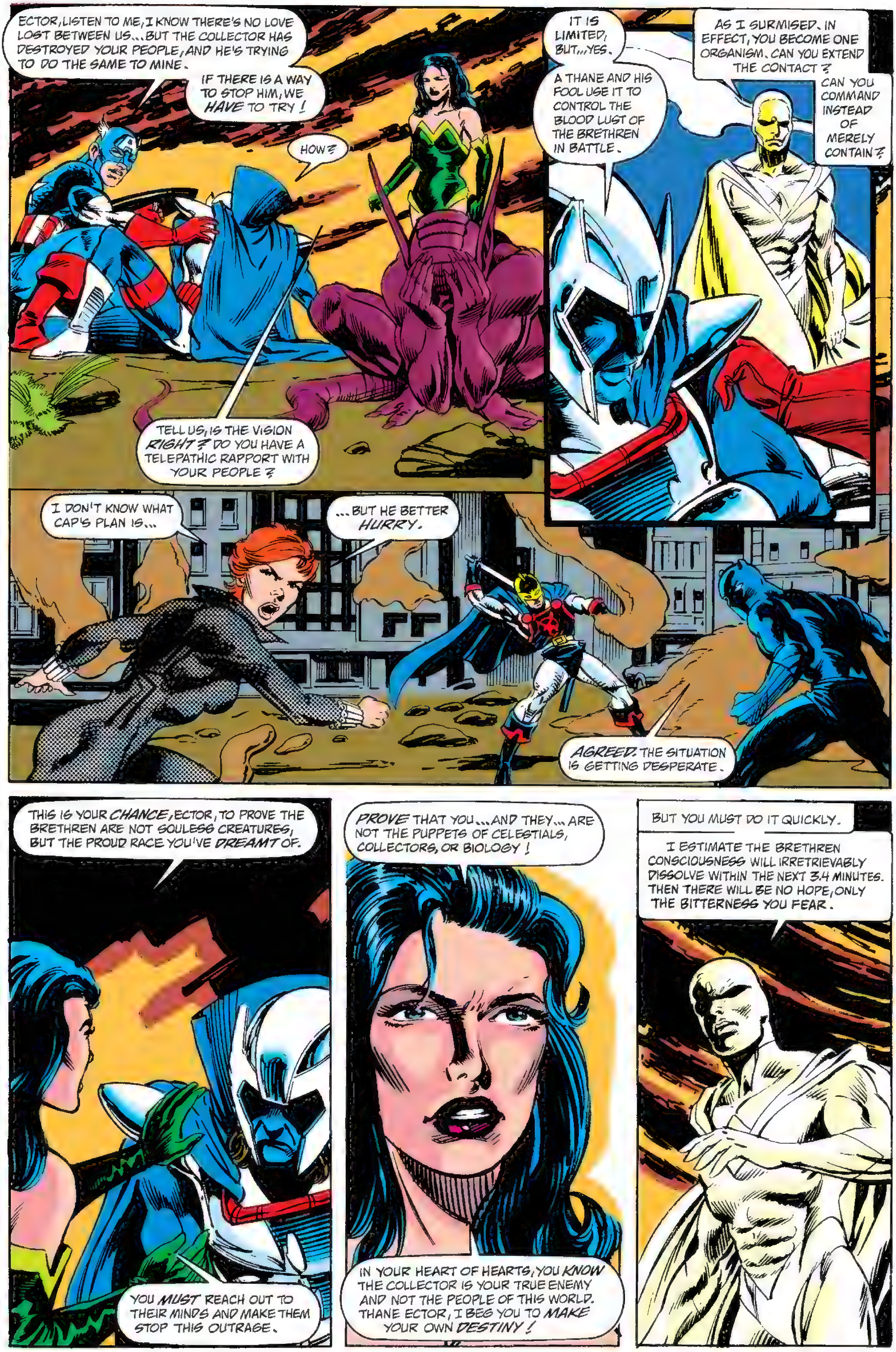

HERCSTER, PUNCHIN' THESE SLIMEY BLOBS IS ABOUT AS EFFECTIVE AS FIGHTIN' SILLY PUTTY!
FRIEND RAGE, THOU DOTH OFTEN SAY I AM DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND--
--BUT KNOW THIS, THOU ART *EQUALLY* INSCRUTABLE TO THE PRINCE OF POWER!
RAGE
I PRAY THEE, NO INSULT IS MEANT!
HEY, I'M CHILL.
BUT HERC, THESE THINGS ARE SPREADIN' LIKE CRAZY--
--AND NOW THEY'RE AFTER THOSE POOR FOLKS! C'MON, LET'S DO SOME *AVENGIN'*!
VISION, THE "BRETHREN" SEEM TO BE GIVING YOU A WIDE BERTH.
THEY DETECT NO BIO-CHEMICAL ACTIVITY IN ME, CRYSTAL.
TO THEM, A SYNTHEZOID IS ALREADY APPARENTLY DEAD, NOT A LIVING THING AT ALL.
CAPTAIN AMERICA! HOW GOES THE BATTLE?
POW
SERSI!
A WHOLE LOT BETTER NOW THAT YOU'RE BACK WITH US!
I'M AFRAID OUR REUNION'S GOING TO BE SWEET AND *SHORT*, CAPTAIN--
--FOR I MUST FIND THANE ECTOR!
SERSI?!

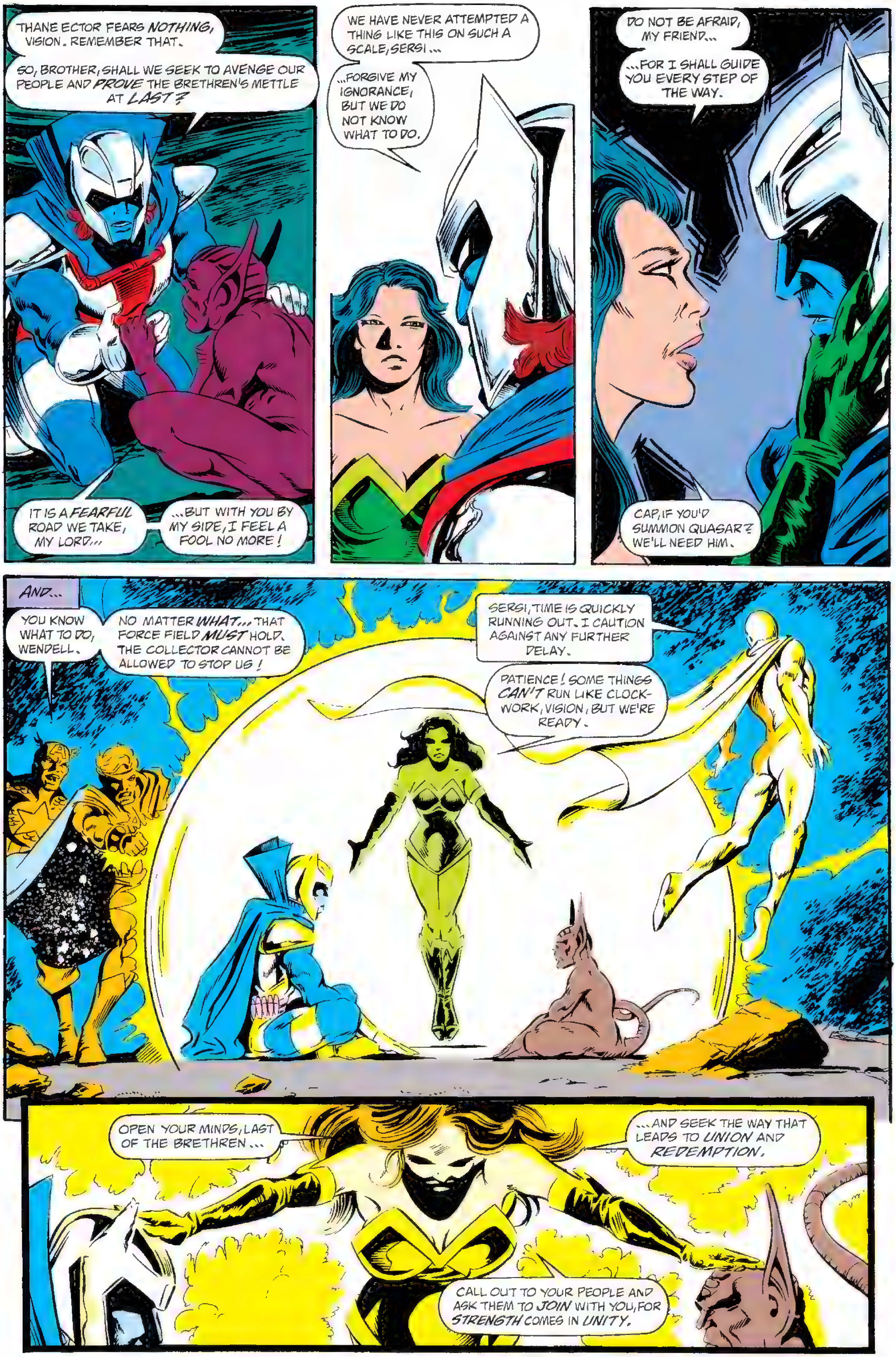

YOU KNOW WHAT YOU DO IS WRONG, COLLECTOR. WHY ELSE WOULD YOU HAVE SOUGHT TO HIDE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THIS CRIME FROM ME ?
HUMANITY DOES NOT DESERVE THIS. AS AN ELDER, YOU KNOW THEIRS IS A GREATER DESTINY THAN TO END UP AS PITIFUL SPECIMENS IN AN INTERGALACTIC ZOO.
I DO WHAT I MUST. I AM WHAT I AM.
AS ARE YOU, UATU, OLD FRIEND.
YOU HAVE THE POWER TO STOP ALL THIS, YET YOU DO NOT.
WHY?
BECAUSE IT IS YOUR LOT IN THE SCHEME OF THINGS TO BE BUT AN OBSERVER IN THE TAPESTRY OF LIFE.
YOUR SEDENTARY COMPULSION, WATCHER, IS AS KEEN AS MINE IS TO COLLECT. DESPITE YOUR PROTESTATIONS, YOU ARE NO MORE NOBLE THAN I !
WE, LIKE THE POOR BRETHREN, WERE CREATED TO FILL A NEED IN THE GRAND SCHEME... NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS !
IT IS A COSMIC DICTUM WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND, BUT BEINGS SUCH AS WE, WITH OUR SPECIALIZED TALENTS, MAINTAIN THE GALACTIC BALANCE.
AND I WILL HAVE HUMANITY'S SURVIVORS FOR MY COLLECTION IF THAT BALANCE ALLOWS IT--
--AND, FROM ALL APPEARANCES, IT SHALL.
SO WEEP FOR HUMANITY, WATCHER --BUT DO NOT DARE JUDGE ME.

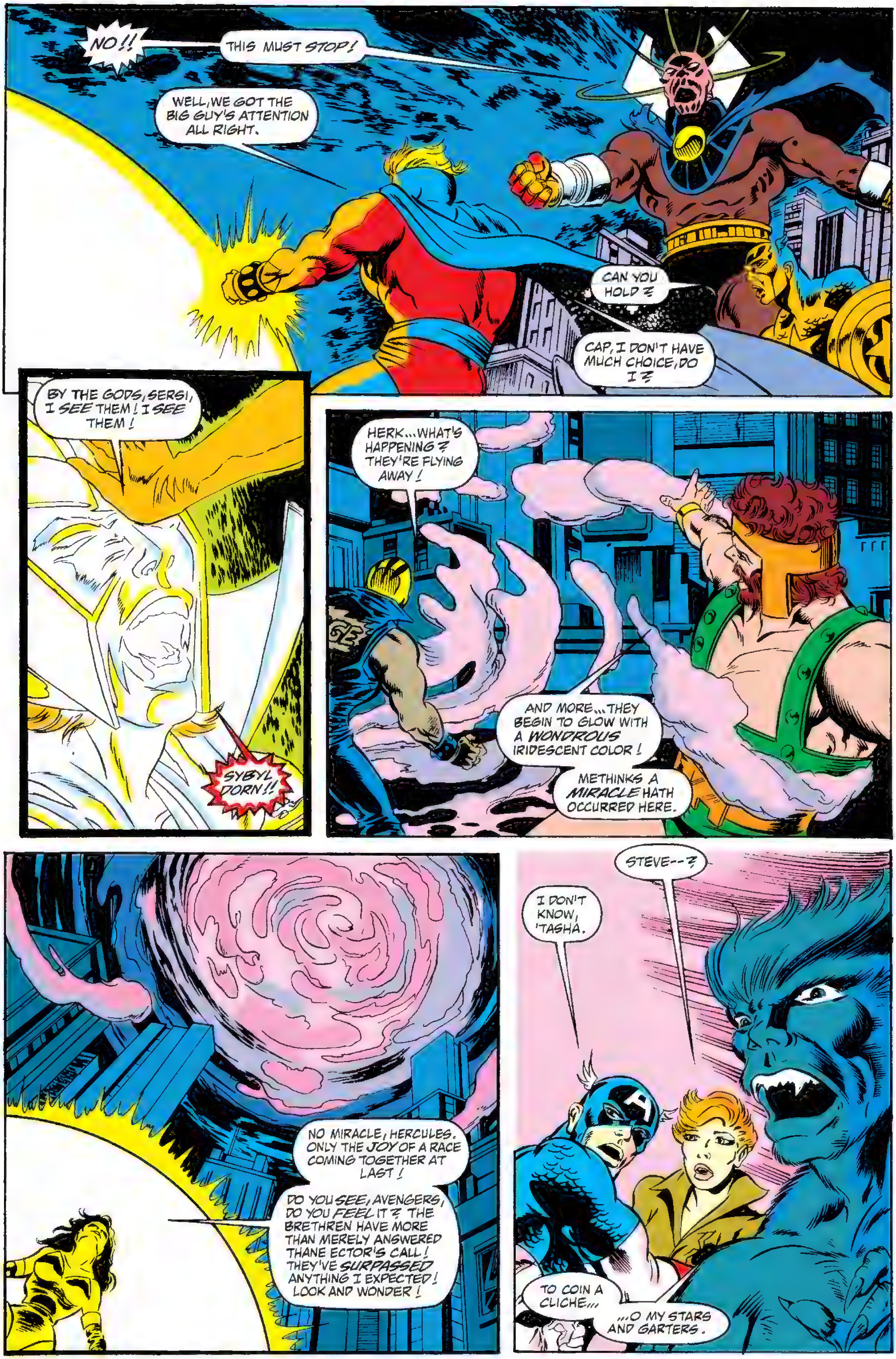

THANE ECTOR! THANK OLYMPIA, YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
DO I TRULY SEEM SO, SERSI? I BELIEVED YOU MORE OBSERVANT THAN THAT.
MY PEOPLE ARE DEAD, MY DREAMS DUST. I AM HARDLY "ALL RIGHT."
ALL IS LOST.
LAUGH AT ME, SERSI, FOR I, NOT MY BROTHER, AM THE FOOL.
I BELIEVED I COULD BE A GREAT LEADER, THAT I COULD MAKE MY PEOPLE A GREAT RACE AND FREE US FROM OUR GENETIC ORIGINS.
BUT WE WERE PAWNS-- ALWAYS, ALWAYS PAWNS.
WHAT HUBRIS I HAD TO *BELIEVE* IN THINGS, SERSI. I, A CREATURE EVOLVED FROM BASE, FOUL MATTER. HOW IT *DISGUSTS* ME NOW.
NO! THANE ECTOR, YOU *ARE* MORE THAN THAT!
LISTEN TO ME! I'VE HEARD YOU. I'VE FELT YOUR PASSION FOR LIFE AND DREAMS. ANY LIFEFORM THAT *FEELS* CAN ACHEIVE GLORY.
WHAT YOU --OR ME-- OR ANY RACE EVOLVED FROM IS IMMATERIAL! IT'S WHAT YOU ARE NOW, WHAT YOU ASPIRE TO THAT MATTERS!
YOU *SHARE* THAT SPARK OF DESTINY THAT ALL SENTIENT LIFE ENJOYS, ECTOR! REMEMBER THAT...
HOLD ON TO IT AND CHERISH IT--
EEEEEEEEEEEEEE
BY ZURAS --WHAT IS *THAT?!*

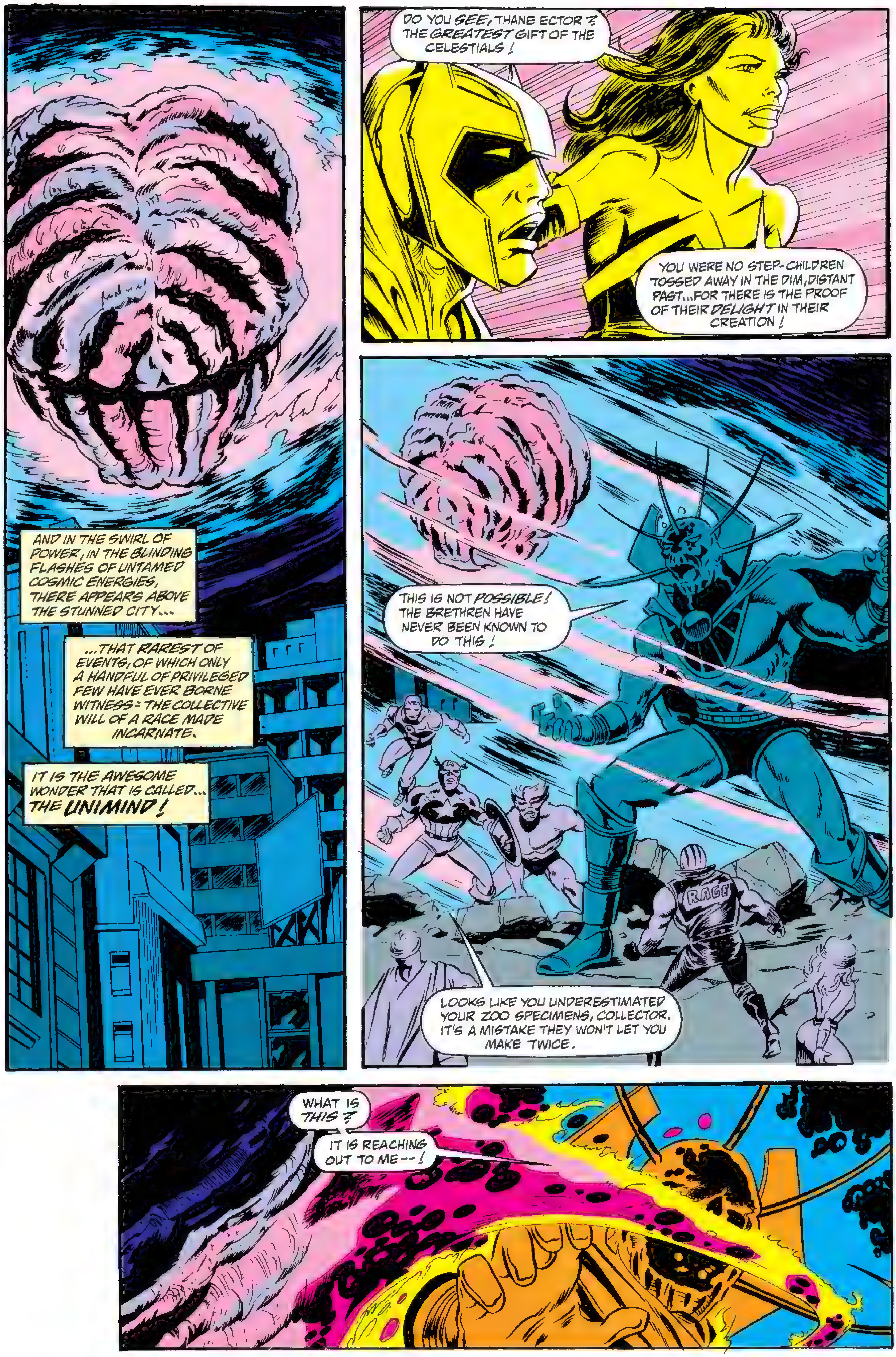

EEEEEEE..
O, MY BROTHERS, YOU ARE SO LOST, SO AFRAID!
YOU CRY OUT FOR SOLACE... BUT THERE IS NONE TO GIVE. ALL, ALL IS DESPAIR.
VISION?
APPARENTLY THE CREATURE IS IN TELEPATHIC CONTACT WITH THE DISEMBODIED BRETHREN.
THIS SUPPORTS A HYPOTHESIS OF GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS THAT I'VE BEEN FORMULATING SINCE OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THEM ON THE MOON.
ECTOR--
LET ME THROUGH, AVENGER...
...MY FOOL NEEDS ME, FOR HE FEELS OUR PEOPLE'S AGONY.
THERE, THERE, LITTLE ONE, DO NOT BE AFRAID...
...YOU ARE NO LONGER ALONE. I AM WITH YOU TO SHARE THE BURDEN.
CAPTAIN, I BELIEVE THE FOOL IS EXPERIENCING A PRIMITIVE FORM OF COLLECTIVE WILL, A DISTANT RELATIVE OF THE UNIMIND PHENOMENA THAT THE ETERNALS EXPERIENCE.
THE SIMILAR ORIGIN OF THE TWO RACES SUGGESTS THIS IS FUNDAMENTALLY POSSIBLE.
IF WE CAN HARNESS THE BRETHREN'S SENTIENCE BEFORE IT DISSIPATES ANY FURTHER...
...PERHAPS WE CAN STOP THE COLLECTOR'S PLAN BY REASONING WITH THEM THAT THERE IS NO POINT IN DECIMATING THE HUMAN RACE.
AS THE ONLY TWO INDIVIDUAL BRETHREN REMAINING, THANE ECTOR, YOU AND THE FOOL MAY BE YOUR RACE'S LAST HOPE.
AND CAN SUCH HOPE ENDURE, SYNTHEZOID?
OR WILL IT, TOO, END IN BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT?

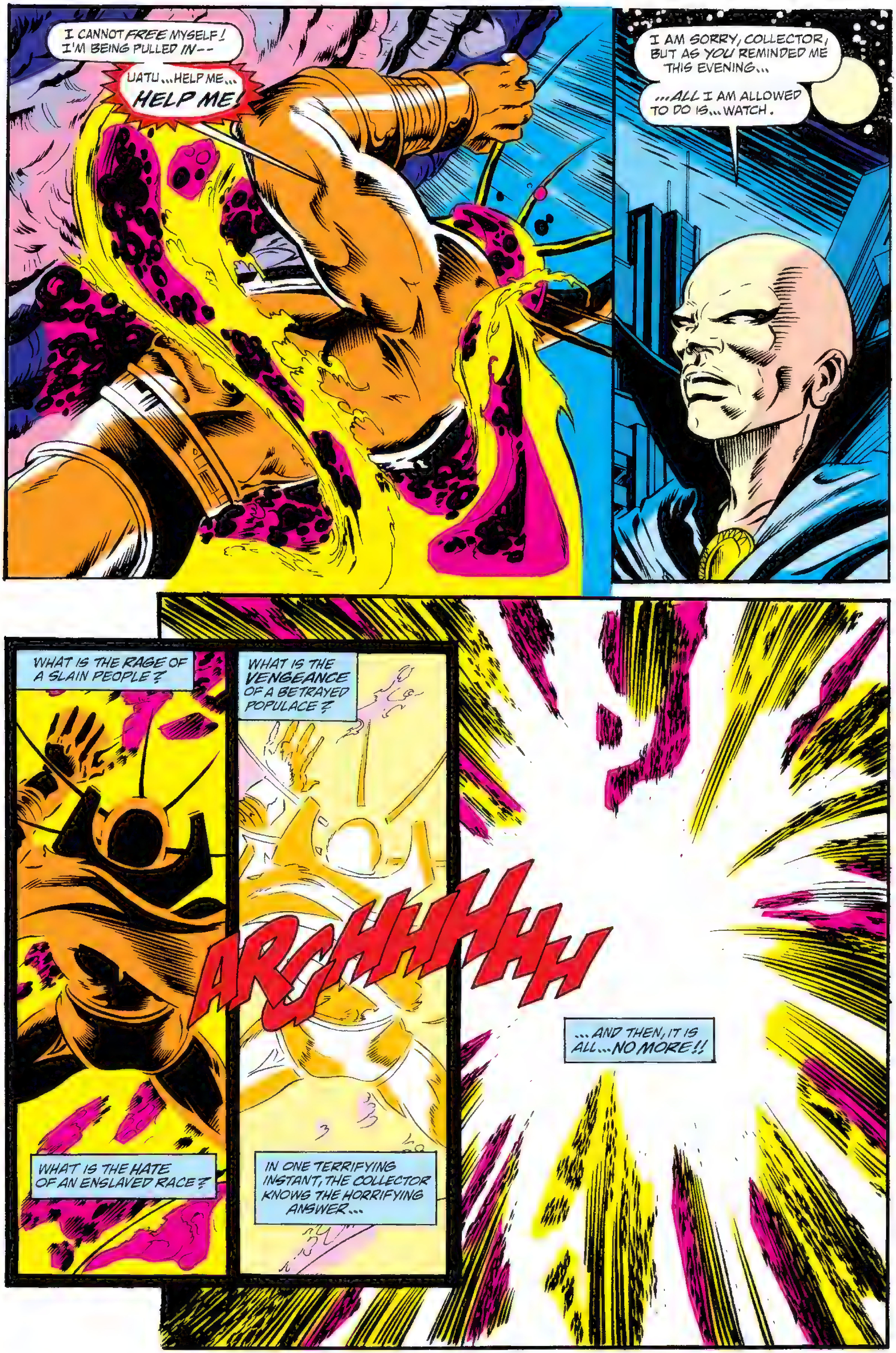

ALL IS DISAPPOINTMENT, ECTOR--
--AND YOURS IS A HOPELESS CAUSE, AVENGERS!
INTERESTING HE TOOK NOTE OF US AT THAT POINT.
HERCULES, CRYSTAL, IRON MAN... DO WHATEVER YOU CAN TO KEEP THE COLLECTOR OCCUPIED. VISION, COME WITH ME.
HERCULES, BEWARE!
I'M GENERATING FOCUSED SEISMIC WAVES.
MY THANKS FOR THE TIMELY WARNING, FAIR CRYSTAL--
--BUT AS YOUR ELEMENTAL POWER DISTRACTS THE COLLECTOR, THE SON OF ZEUS SHALL FINISH THE DASTARDLY VILLAIN FOR ALL ETERNITY.
DON'T GET COCKY, HERK...
...OR HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED OUR FRIEND IS GROWING?!
DO YOU NOT YET UNDERSTAND? I AM TANELEER TIVAN--AN ELDER OF THIS UNIVERSE, THE APPOINTED COLLECTOR! FOR CENTURIES, MY GUISE AS A HUMBLE HUMANOID HAS FOOLED MANY, BUT KNOW THIS WELL--
--I WILL NOT BE DENIED! I CANNOT BE.

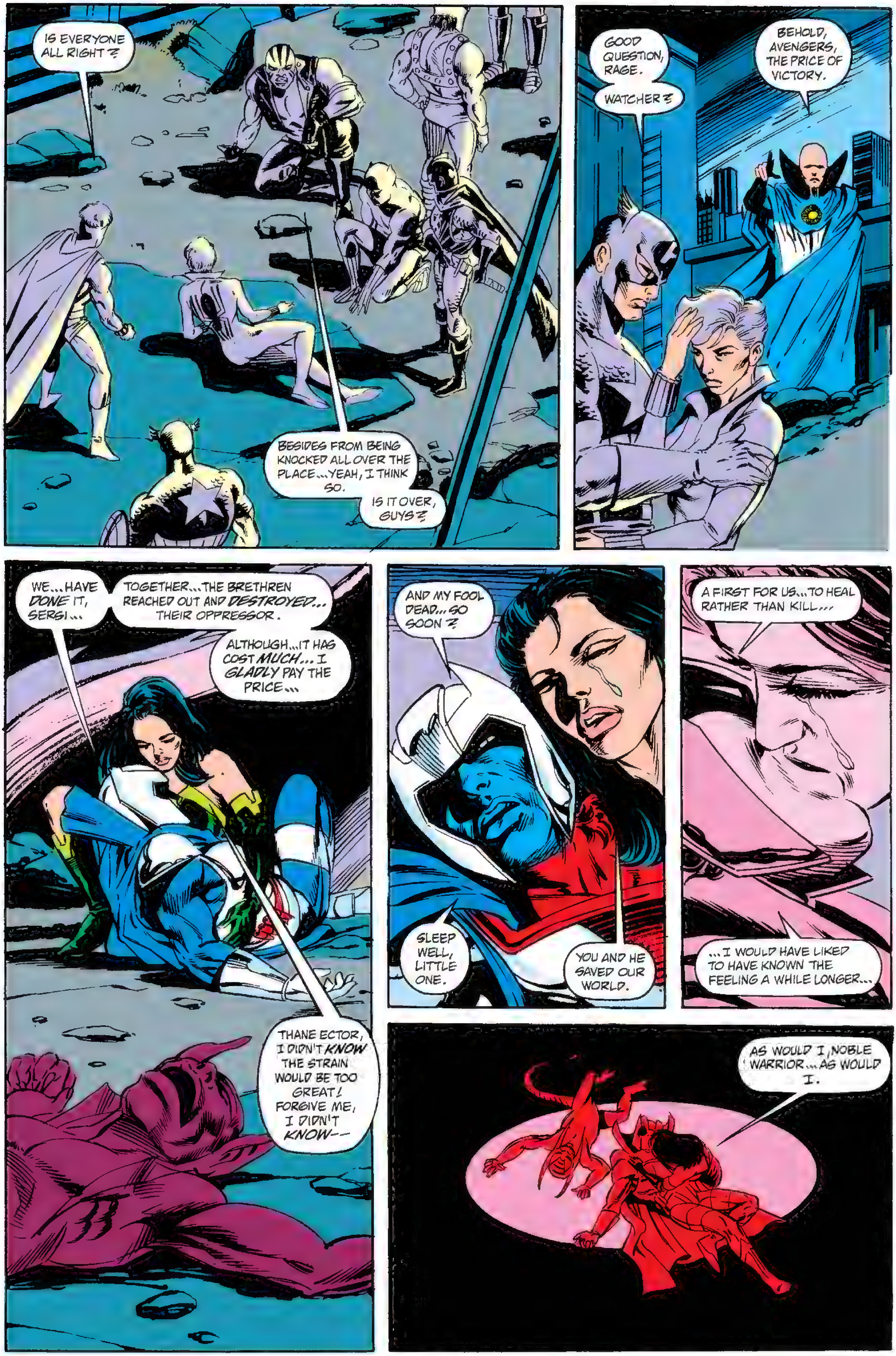

ECTOR, LISTEN TO ME, I KNOW THERE'S NO LOVE LOST BETWEEN US... BUT THE COLLECTOR HAS DESTROYED YOUR PEOPLE, AND HE'S TRYING TO DO THE SAME TO MINE.
IF THERE IS A WAY TO STOP HIM, WE *HAVE* TO TRY!
HOW?
TELL US, IS THE VISION *RIGHT?* DO YOU HAVE A TELEPATHIC RAPPORT WITH YOUR PEOPLE?
IT IS LIMITED, BUT... YES.
A THANE AND HIS FOOL USE IT TO CONTROL THE BLOOD LUST OF THE BRETHREN IN BATTLE.
AS I SURMISED. IN EFFECT, YOU BECOME ONE ORGANISM. CAN YOU EXTEND THE CONTACT?
CAN YOU COMMAND INSTEAD OF MERELY CONTAIN?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAP'S PLAN IS...
...BUT HE BETTER *HURRY.*
AGREED. THE SITUATION IS GETTING DESPERATE.
THIS IS YOUR *CHANCE*, ECTOR, TO PROVE THE BRETHREN ARE NOT SOULESS CREATURES, BUT THE PROUD RACE YOU'VE *DREAMT* OF.
YOU *MUST* REACH OUT TO THEIR MINDS AND MAKE THEM STOP THIS OUTRAGE.
PROVE THAT YOU... AND THEY... ARE NOT THE PUPPETS OF CELESTIALS, COLLECTORS, OR BIOLOGY!
IN YOUR HEART OF HEARTS, YOU *KNOW* THE COLLECTOR IS YOUR TRUE ENEMY AND NOT THE PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD. THANE ECTOR, I BEG YOU TO *MAKE* YOUR OWN *DESTINY!*
BUT YOU MUST DO IT QUICKLY.
I ESTIMATE THE BRETHREN CONSCIOUSNESS WILL IRRETRIEVABLY DISSOLVE WITHIN THE NEXT 3.4 MINUTES. THEN THERE WILL BE NO HOPE, ONLY THE BITTERNESS YOU FEAR.

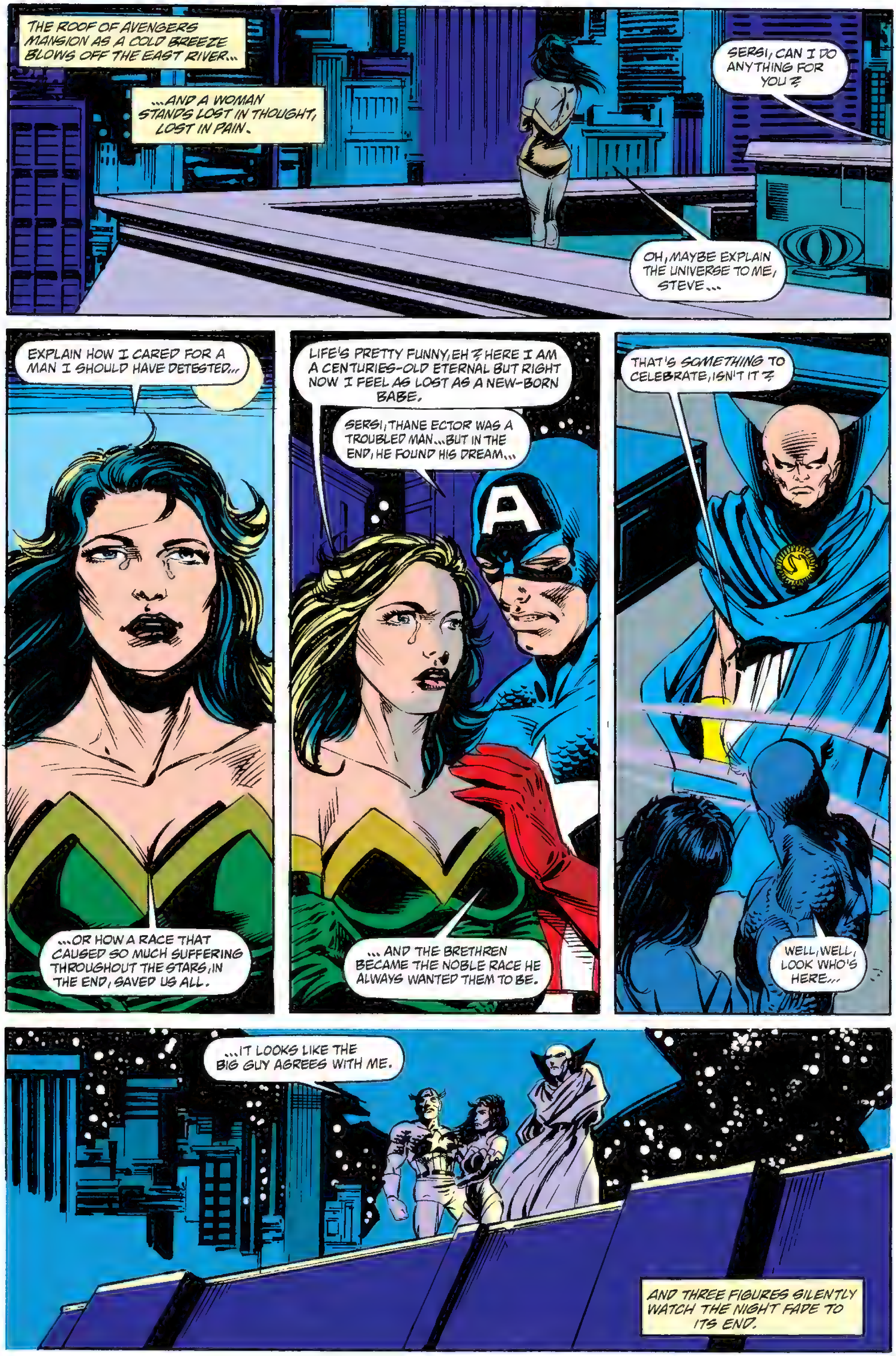

THANE ECTOR FEARS *NOTHING*, VISION. REMEMBER THAT.
SO, BROTHER, SHALL WE SEEK TO AVENGE OUR PEOPLE AND *PROVE* THE BRETHREN'S METTLE AT *LAST?*
IT IS A *FEARFUL* ROAD WE TAKE, MY LORD...
...BUT WITH YOU BY MY SIDE, I FEEL A FOOL NO MORE!
WE HAVE NEVER ATTEMPTED A THING LIKE THIS ON SUCH A SCALE, SERSI...
...FORGIVE MY IGNORANCE, BUT WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO.
DO NOT BE AFRAID, MY FRIEND...
...FOR I SHALL GUIDE YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.
CAP, IF YOU'D SUMMON QUASAR? WE'LL NEED HIM.
AND...
YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO, WENDELL.
NO MATTER *WHAT...* THAT FORCE FIELD *MUST* HOLD. THE COLLECTOR CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO STOP US!
SERSI, TIME IS QUICKLY RUNNING OUT. I CAUTION AGAINST ANY FURTHER DELAY.
PATIENCE! SOME THINGS *CAN'T* RUN LIKE CLOCKWORK, VISION, BUT WE'RE READY.
OPEN YOUR MINDS, LAST OF THE BRETHREN...
...AND SEEK THE WAY THAT LEADS TO *UNION* AND *REDEMPTION.*
CALL OUT TO YOUR PEOPLE AND ASK THEM TO *JOIN* WITH YOU, FOR *STRENGTH* COMES IN *UNITY.*


NO!!
THIS MUST STOP!
WELL, WE GOT THE BIG GUY'S ATTENTION ALL RIGHT.
CAN YOU HOLD?
CAP, I DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE, DO I?
BY THE GODS, SERSI, I SEE THEM! I SEE THEM!
SYBYL DORN!!
HERK...WHAT'S HAPPENING? THEY'RE FLYING AWAY!
AND MORE...THEY BEGIN TO GLOW WITH A WONDROUS IRIDESCENT COLOR!
METHINKS A MIRACLE HATH OCCURRED HERE.
NO MIRACLE, HERCULES. ONLY THE JOY OF A RACE COMING TOGETHER AT LAST!
DO YOU SEE, AVENGERS, DO YOU FEEL IT? THE BRETHREN HAVE MORE THAN MERELY ANSWERED THANE ECTOR'S CALL! THEY'VE SURPASSED ANYTHING I EXPECTED! LOOK AND WONDER!
STEVE--?
I DON'T KNOW, 'TASHA.
TO COIN A CLICHE...
...O MY STARS AND GARTERS.


AND IN THE SWIRL OF POWER, IN THE BLINDING FLASHES OF UNTAMED COSMIC ENERGIES, THERE APPEARS ABOVE THE STUNNED CITY...
...THAT RAREST OF EVENTS, OF WHICH ONLY A HANDFUL OF PRIVILEGED FEW HAVE EVER BORNE WITNESS: THE COLLECTIVE WILL OF A RACE MADE INCARNATE.
IT IS THE AWESOME WONDER THAT IS CALLED... THE UNIMIND!
DO YOU SEE, THANE ECTOR? THE GREATEST GIFT OF THE CELESTIALS!
YOU WERE NO STEP-CHILDREN TOSSED AWAY IN THE DIM, DISTANT PAST...FOR THERE IS THE PROOF OF THEIR DELIGHT IN THEIR CREATION!
THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE! THE BRETHREN HAVE NEVER BEEN KNOWN TO DO THIS!
RAGE
LOOKS LIKE YOU UNDERESTIMATED YOUR ZOO SPECIMENS, COLLECTOR. IT'S A MISTAKE THEY WON'T LET YOU MAKE TWICE.
WHAT IS THIS?
IT IS REACHING OUT TO ME--!


I CANNOT *FREE* MYSELF! I'M BEING PULLED *IN*--
UATU...HELP ME... *HELP ME!*
I AM SORRY, COLLECTOR, BUT AS *YOU* REMINDED ME THIS EVENING...
...*ALL* I AM ALLOWED TO DO IS...WATCH.
WHAT IS THE *RAGE* OF A SLAIN PEOPLE?
WHAT IS THE HATE OF AN ENSLAVED RACE?
WHAT IS THE *VENGEANCE* OF A BETRAYED POPULACE?
IN ONE TERRIFYING INSTANT, THE COLLECTOR KNOWS THE HORRIFYING ANSWER...
ARGHHHHHH
...AND THEN, IT IS ALL...*NO MORE!!*


IS EVERYONE ALL RIGHT?
BESIDES FROM BEING KNOCKED ALL OVER THE PLACE... YEAH, I THINK SO.
IS IT OVER, GUYS?
GOOD QUESTION, RAGE.
WATCHER?
BEHOLD, AVENGERS, THE PRICE OF VICTORY.
WE... HAVE *DONE* IT, SERGI...
TOGETHER... THE BRETHREN REACHED OUT AND *DESTROYED...* THEIR OPPRESSOR.
ALTHOUGH... IT HAS COST *MUCH...* I *GLADLY* PAY THE PRICE...
THANE ECTOR, I DIDN'T *KNOW* THE STRAIN WOULD BE TOO GREAT! FORGIVE ME, I DIDN'T *KNOW*--
AND MY FOOL DEAD... SO SOON?
SLEEP WELL, LITTLE ONE.
YOU AND HE SAVED OUR WORLD.
A FIRST FOR US... TO HEAL RATHER THAN KILL...
...I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE KNOWN THE FEELING A WHILE LONGER...
AS WOULD I, NOBLE WARRIOR... AS WOULD I.

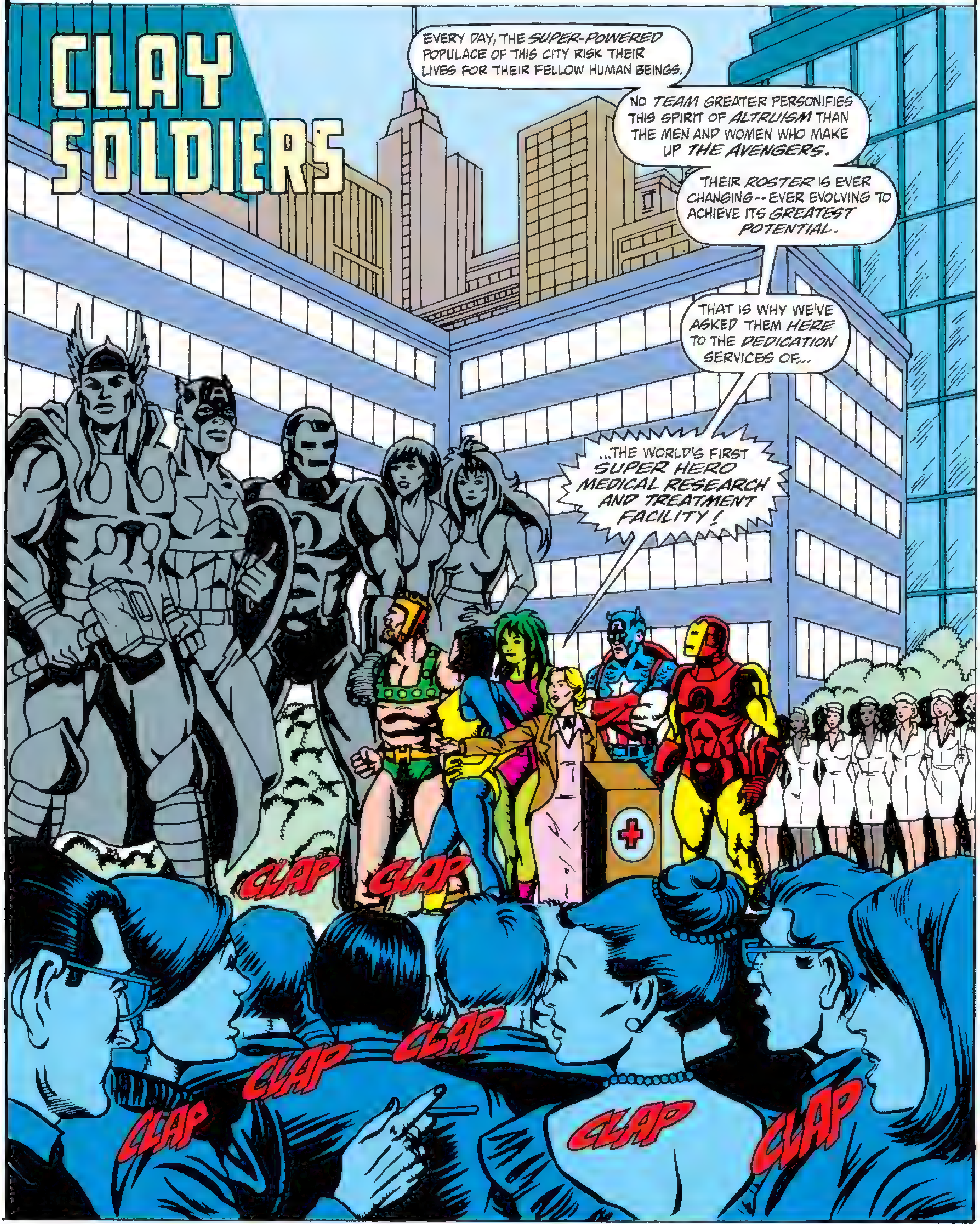

THE ROOF OF AVENGERS MANSION AS A COLD BREEZE BLOWS OFF THE EAST RIVER...
...AND A WOMAN STANDS LOST IN THOUGHT, LOST IN PAIN.
SERSI, CAN I DO ANYTHING FOR YOU?
OH, MAYBE EXPLAIN THE UNIVERSE TO ME, STEVE...
EXPLAIN HOW I CARED FOR A MAN I SHOULD HAVE DETESTED...
...OR HOW A RACE THAT CAUSED SO MUCH SUFFERING THROUGHOUT THE STARS, IN THE END, SAVED US ALL.
LIFE'S PRETTY FUNNY, EH? HERE I AM A CENTURIES-OLD ETERNAL BUT RIGHT NOW I FEEL AS LOST AS A NEW-BORN BABE.
SERSI, THANE ECTOR WAS A TROUBLED MAN...BUT IN THE END, HE FOUND HIS DREAM...
... AND THE BRETHREN BECAME THE NOBLE RACE HE ALWAYS WANTED THEM TO BE.
THAT'S SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE, ISN'T IT?
WELL, WELL, LOOK WHO'S HERE...
...IT LOOKS LIKE THE BIG GUY AGREES WITH ME.
AND THREE FIGURES SILENTLY WATCH THE NIGHT FADE TO ITS END.

Ron '91 Lim
JP

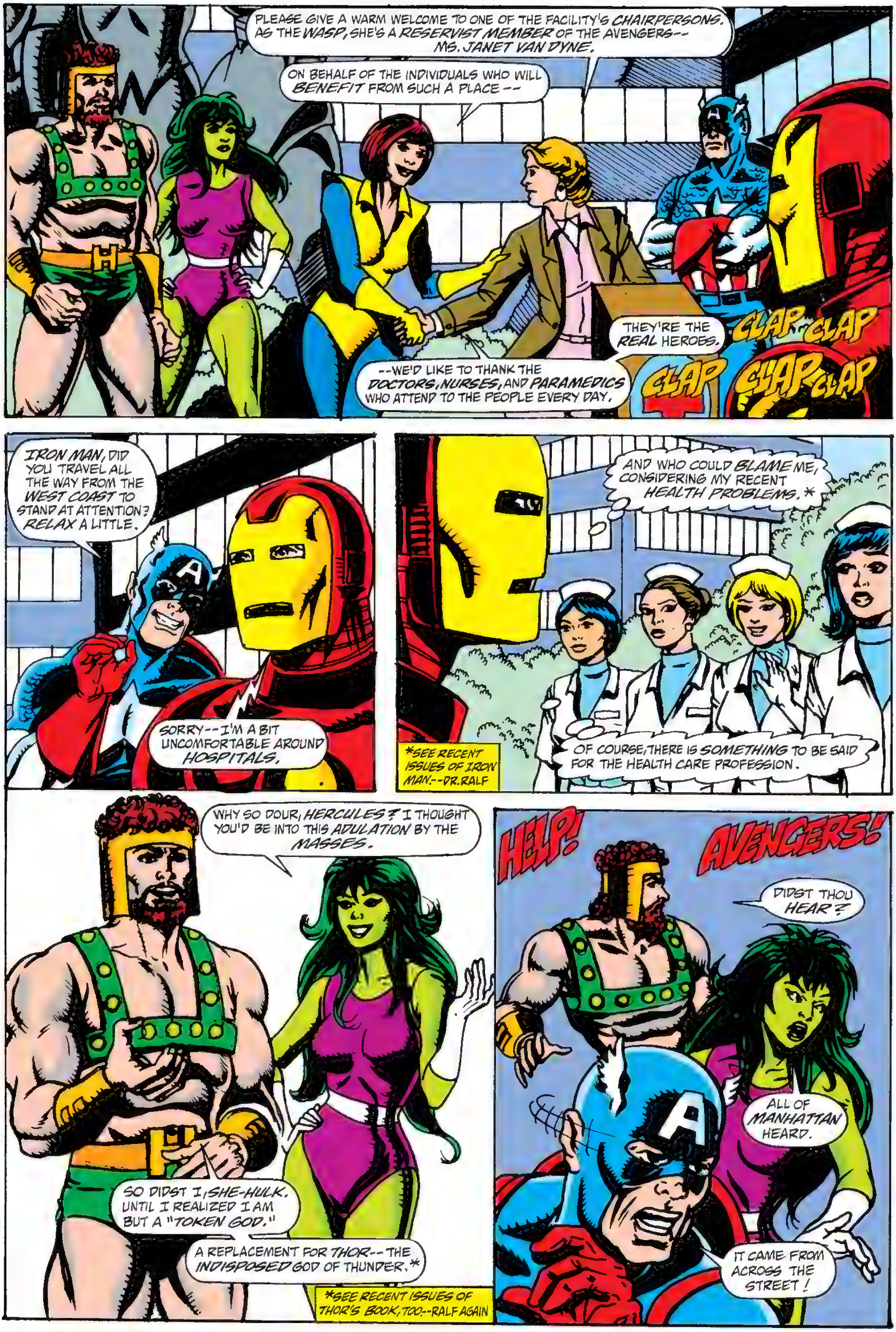
MARVEL COMICS
© 1991 MARVEL ENT GROUP, INC
AVENGERS®
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN/UK 65p
340
LATE OCT
CC 02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
UMM... CAP--I THINK WE HAVE A SMALL PROBLEM!
RON LIM 91

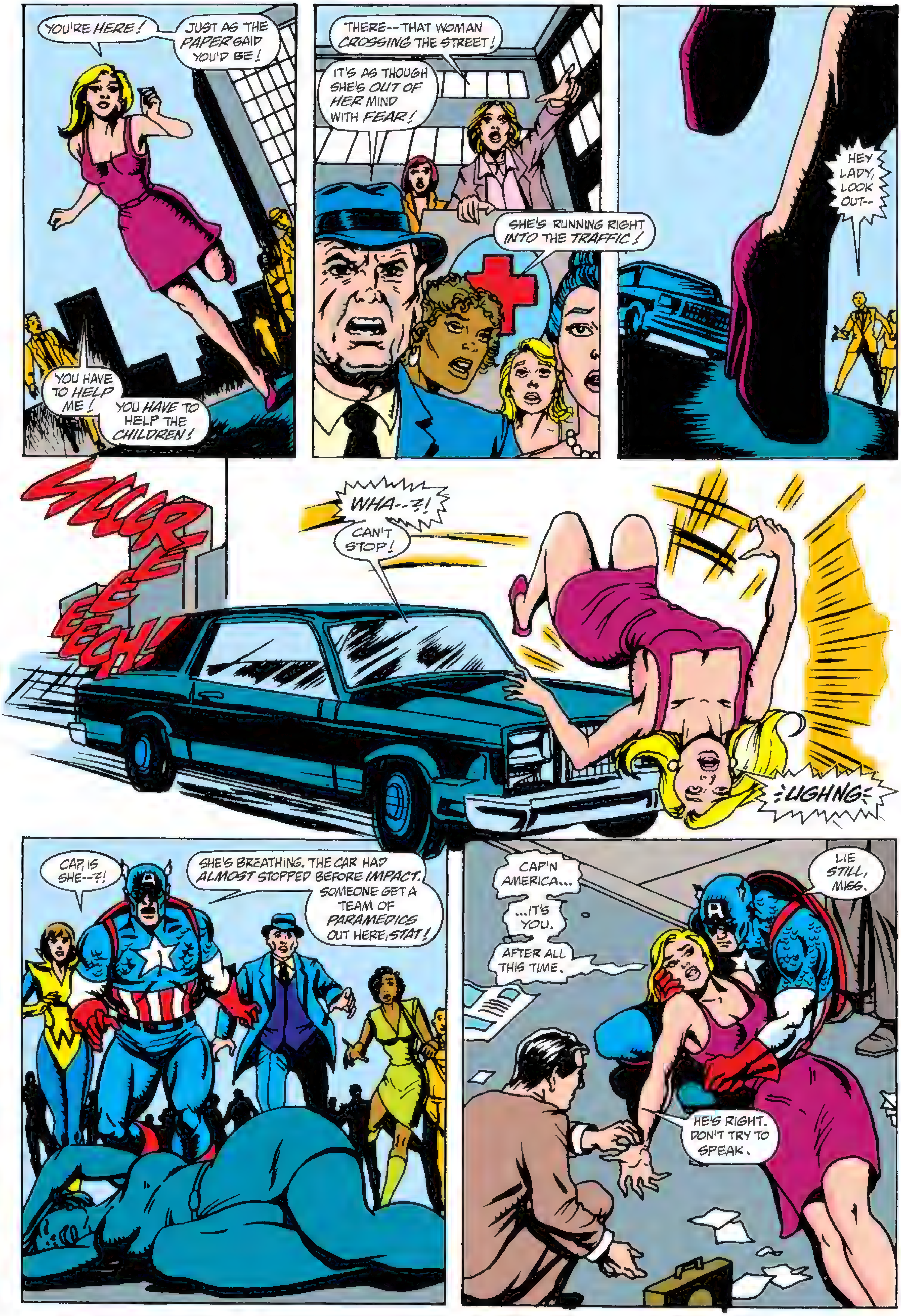
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . .

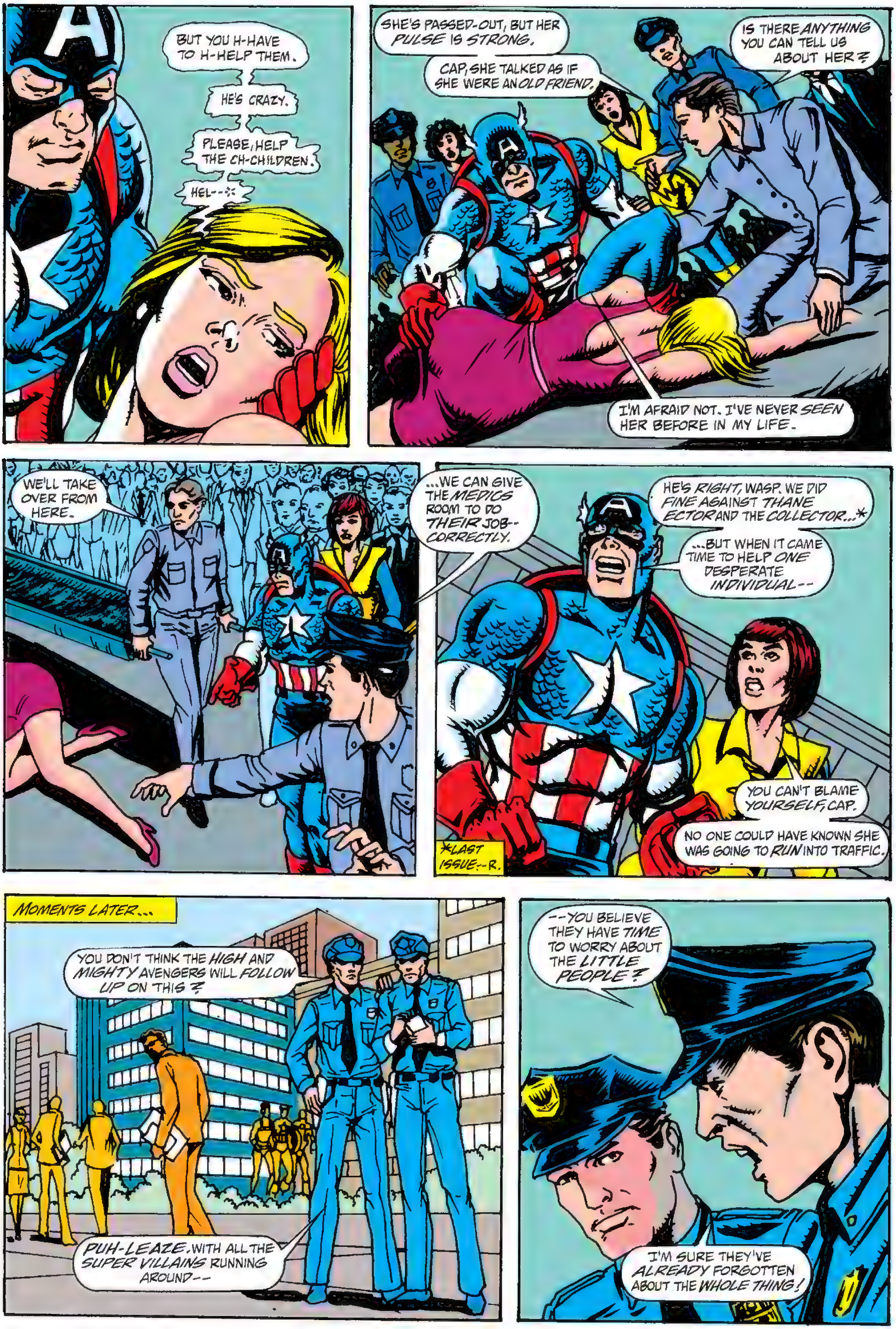
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

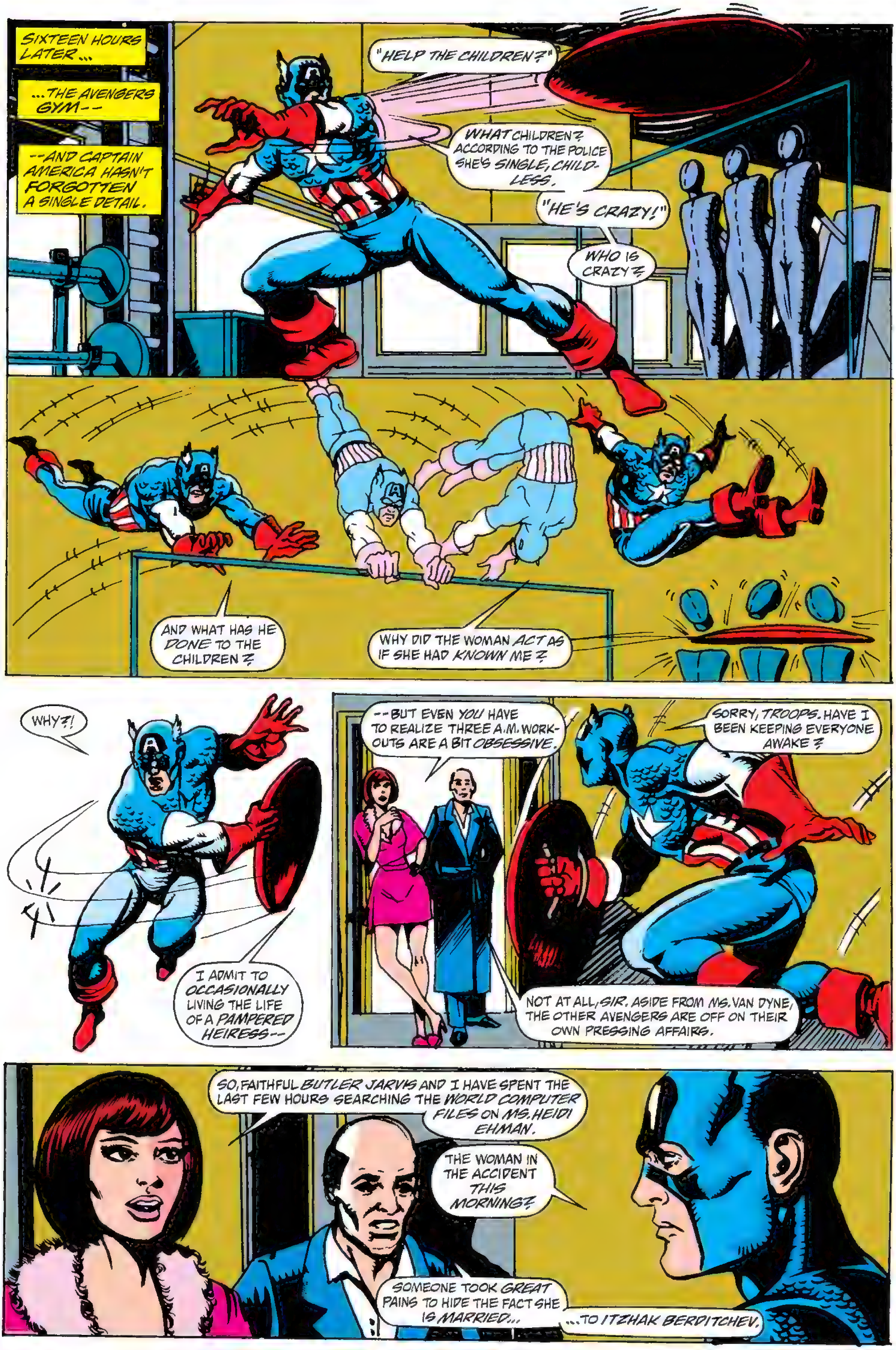

CLAY SOLDIERS
EVERY DAY, THE SUPER-POWERED POPULACE OF THIS CITY RISK THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS.
NO TEAM GREATER PERSONIFIES THIS SPIRIT OF ALTRUISM THAN THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO MAKE UP THE AVENGERS.
THEIR ROSTER IS EVER CHANGING--EVER EVOLVING TO ACHIEVE ITS GREATEST POTENTIAL.
THAT IS WHY WE'VE ASKED THEM HERE TO THE DEDICATION SERVICES OF...
...THE WORLD'S FIRST SUPER HERO MEDICAL RESEARCH AND TREATMENT FACILITY!
CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP

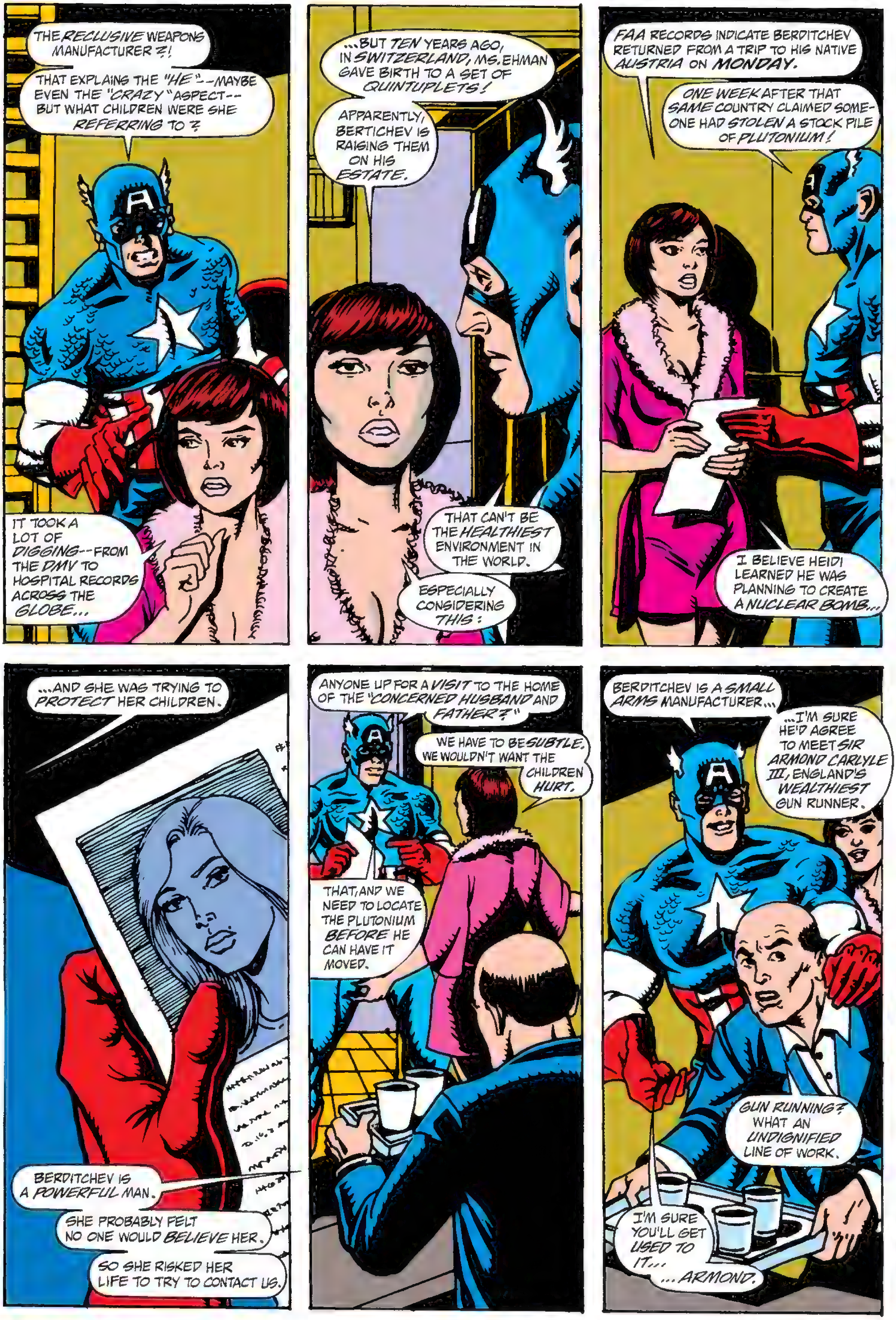
DAVID MICHELINIE PLOT * SCOTT LOBDELL SCRIPT * PAUL ABRAMS PENCILS * R. JONES & CHUCK BARNETTE INKERS * BRAD K. JOYCE LETTERER * WITTERSTAETTER & JAVINS COLORIST * RALF MACCHIO EDITS * TOM DEFALCO MORE EDITS

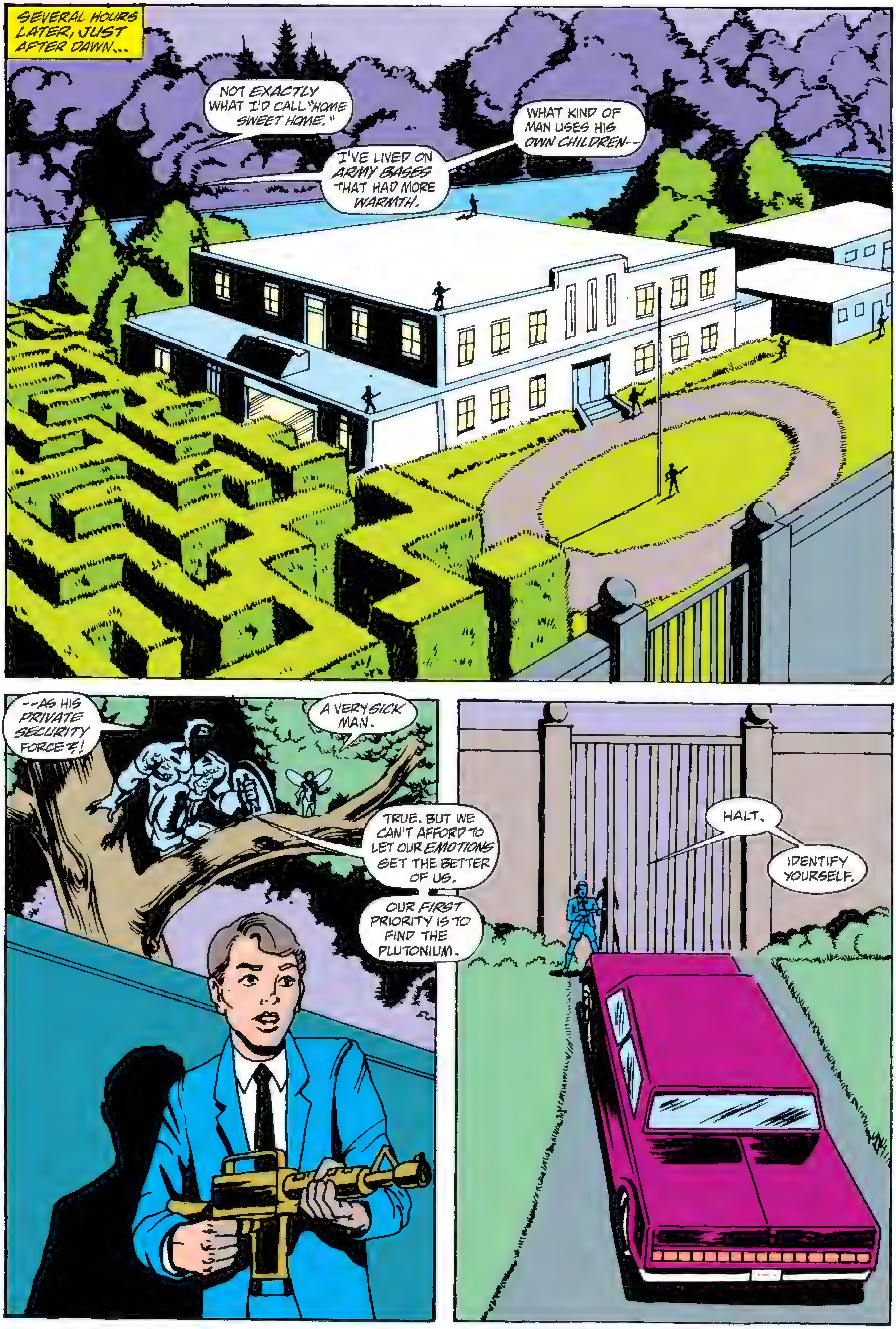

PLEASE GIVE A WARM WELCOME TO ONE OF THE FACILITY'S CHAIRPERSONS. AS THE WASP, SHE'S A RESERVIST MEMBER OF THE AVENGERS-- MS. JANET VAN DYNE.
ON BEHALF OF THE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM SUCH A PLACE --
--WE'D LIKE TO THANK THE DOCTORS, NURSES, AND PARAMEDICS WHO ATTEND TO THE PEOPLE EVERY DAY.
THEY'RE THE REAL HEROES.
CLAP CLAP
CLAP
CLAP CLAP
IRON MAN, DID YOU TRAVEL ALL THE WAY FROM THE WEST COAST TO STAND AT ATTENTION? RELAX A LITTLE.
SORRY--I'M A BIT UNCOMFORTABLE AROUND HOSPITALS.
AND WHO COULD BLAME ME, CONSIDERING MY RECENT HEALTH PROBLEMS.*
*SEE RECENT ISSUES OF IRON MAN.--DR. RALF
OF COURSE, THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE SAID FOR THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSION.
WHY SO DOUR, HERCULES? I THOUGHT YOU'D BE INTO THIS ADULATION BY THE MASSES.
SO DIDST I, SHE-HULK. UNTIL I REALIZED I AM BUT A "TOKEN GOD."
A REPLACEMENT FOR THOR--THE INDISPOSED GOD OF THUNDER.*
*SEE RECENT ISSUES OF THOR'S BOOK, TOO.--RALF AGAIN
HELP! AVENGERS!
DIDST THOU HEAR?
ALL OF MANHATTAN HEARD.
IT CAME FROM ACROSS THE STREET!

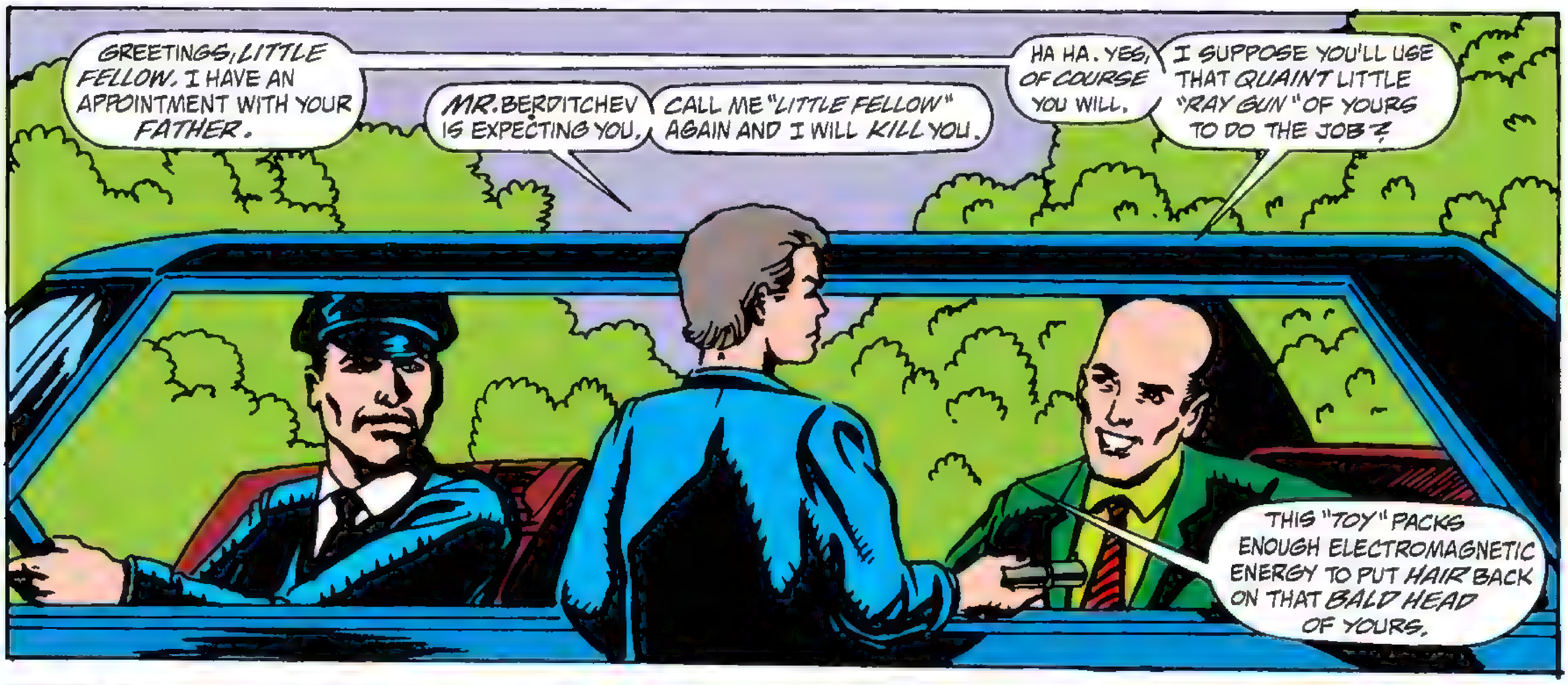

YOU'RE HERE!
JUST AS THE PAPER SAID YOU'D BE!
YOU HAVE TO HELP ME!
YOU HAVE TO HELP THE CHILDREN!
THERE--THAT WOMAN CROSSING THE STREET!
IT'S AS THOUGH SHE'S OUT OF HER MIND WITH FEAR!
SHE'S RUNNING RIGHT INTO THE TRAFFIC!
HEY LADY, LOOK OUT--
SKREEEECH!
WHA--?!
CAN'T STOP!
UGHNG
CAP, IS SHE--?!
SHE'S BREATHING. THE CAR HAD ALMOST STOPPED BEFORE IMPACT.
SOMEONE GET A TEAM OF PARAMEDICS OUT HERE, STAT!
CAP'N AMERICA...
...IT'S YOU.
AFTER ALL THIS TIME.
LIE STILL, MISS.
HE'S RIGHT. DON'T TRY TO SPEAK.

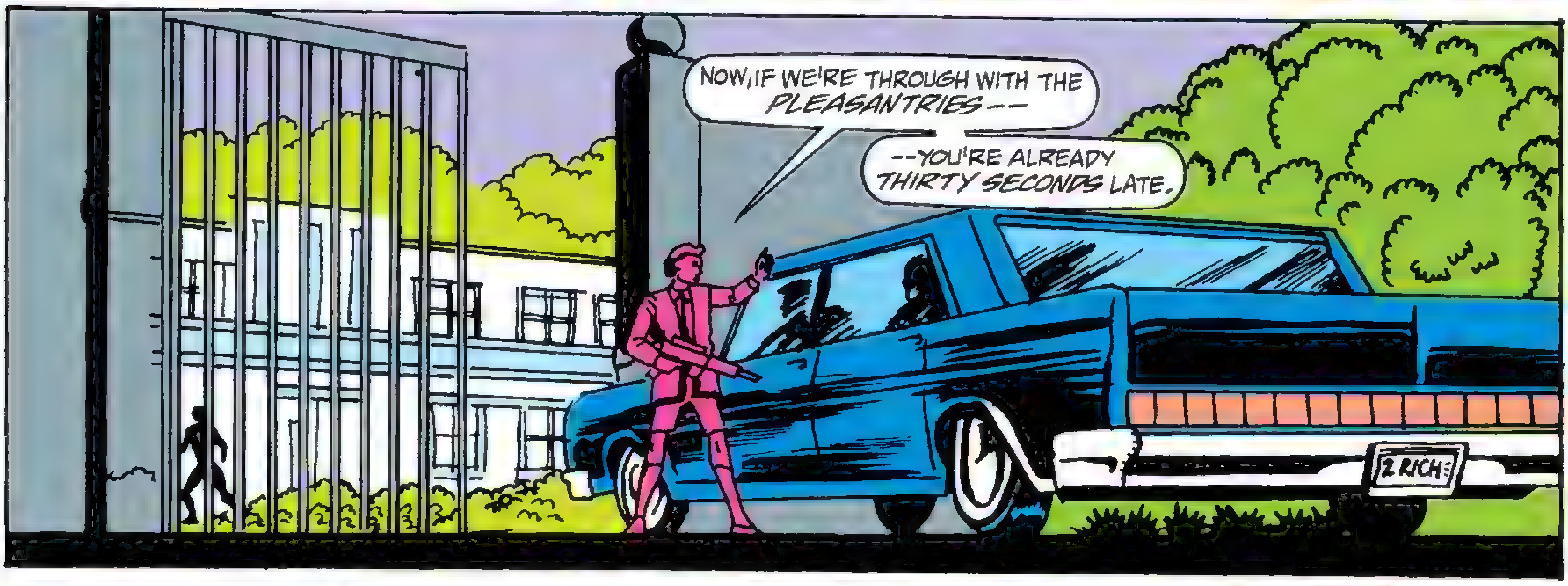

BUT YOU H-HAVE TO H-HELP THEM.
HE'S CRAZY.
PLEASE, HELP THE CH-CHILDREN.
HEL--
SHE'S PASSED-OUT, BUT HER PULSE IS STRONG.
CAP, SHE TALKED AS IF SHE WERE AN OLD FRIEND.
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN TELL US ABOUT HER?
I'M AFRAID NOT. I'VE NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE IN MY LIFE.
WE'LL TAKE OVER FROM HERE.
...WE CAN GIVE THE MEDICS ROOM TO DO THEIR JOB-- CORRECTLY.
HE'S RIGHT, WASP. WE DID FINE AGAINST THANE ECTOR AND THE COLLECTOR...*
...BUT WHEN IT CAME TIME TO HELP ONE DESPERATE INDIVIDUAL--
YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF, CAP.
NO ONE COULD HAVE KNOWN SHE WAS GOING TO RUN INTO TRAFFIC.
*LAST ISSUE.--R.
MOMENTS LATER...
YOU DON'T THINK THE HIGH AND MIGHTY AVENGERS WILL FOLLOW UP ON THIS?
PUH-LEAZE. WITH ALL THE SUPER VILLAINS RUNNING AROUND--
--YOU BELIEVE THEY HAVE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT THE LITTLE PEOPLE?
I'M SURE THEY'VE ALREADY FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE WHOLE THING!

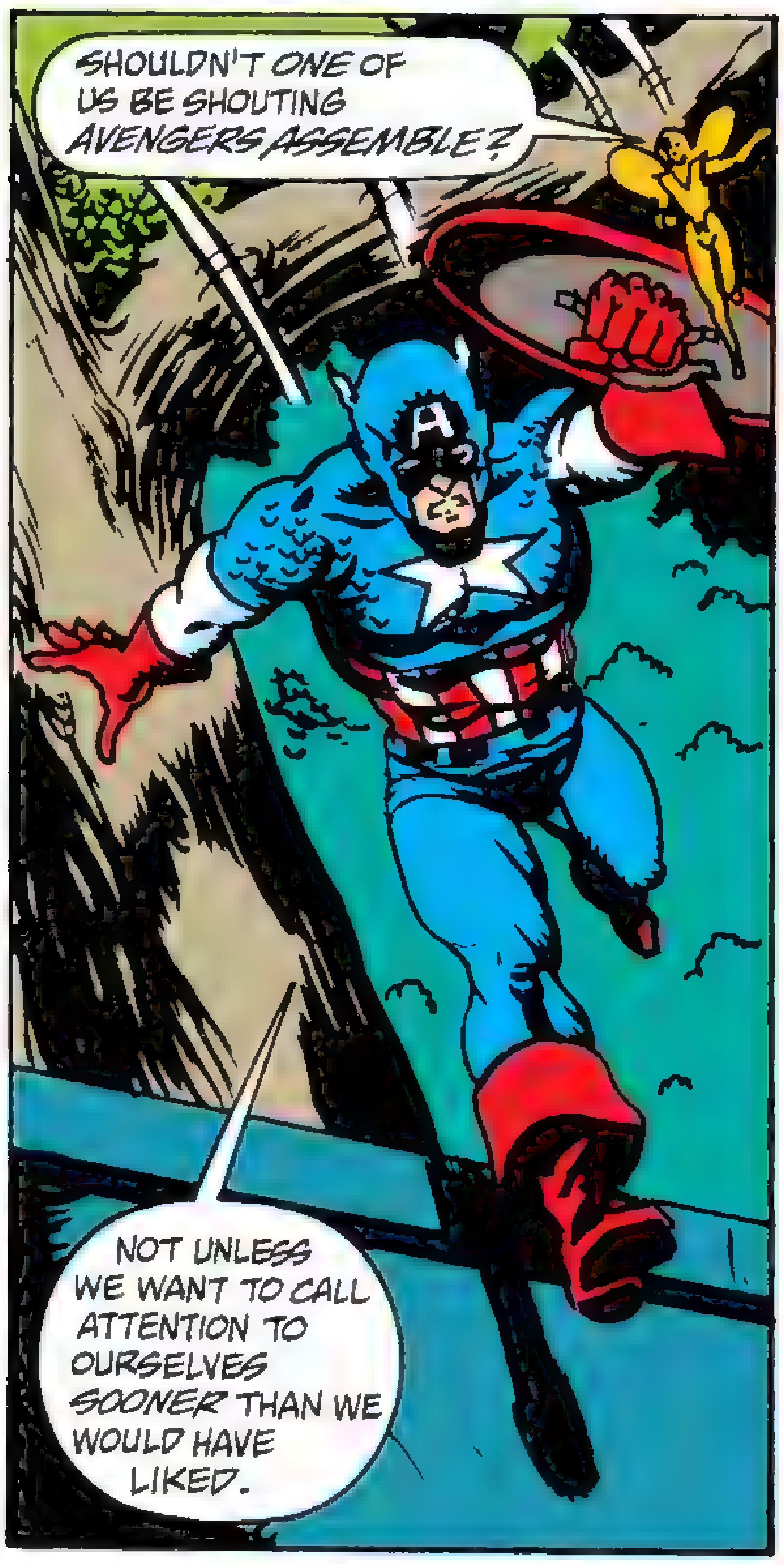

SIXTEEN HOURS LATER...
...THE AVENGERS GYM--
--AND CAPTAIN AMERICA HASN'T FORGOTTEN A SINGLE DETAIL.
"HELP THE CHILDREN?"
WHAT CHILDREN? ACCORDING TO THE POLICE SHE'S SINGLE, CHILDLESS.
"HE'S CRAZY!"
WHO IS CRAZY?
AND WHAT HAS HE DONE TO THE CHILDREN?
WHY DID THE WOMAN ACT AS IF SHE HAD KNOWN ME?
WHY?!
I ADMIT TO OCCASIONALLY LIVING THE LIFE OF A PAMPERED HEIRESS--
--BUT EVEN YOU HAVE TO REALIZE THREE A.M. WORK-OUTS ARE A BIT OBSESSIVE.
SORRY, TROOPS. HAVE I BEEN KEEPING EVERYONE AWAKE?
NOT AT ALL, SIR. ASIDE FROM MS. VAN DYNE, THE OTHER AVENGERS ARE OFF ON THEIR OWN PRESSING AFFAIRS.
SO, FAITHFUL BUTLER JARVIS AND I HAVE SPENT THE LAST FEW HOURS SEARCHING THE WORLD COMPUTER FILES ON MS. HEIDI EHMAN.
THE WOMAN IN THE ACCIDENT THIS MORNING?
SOMEONE TOOK GREAT PAINS TO HIDE THE FACT SHE IS MARRIED...
...TO ITZHAK BERDITCHEV.

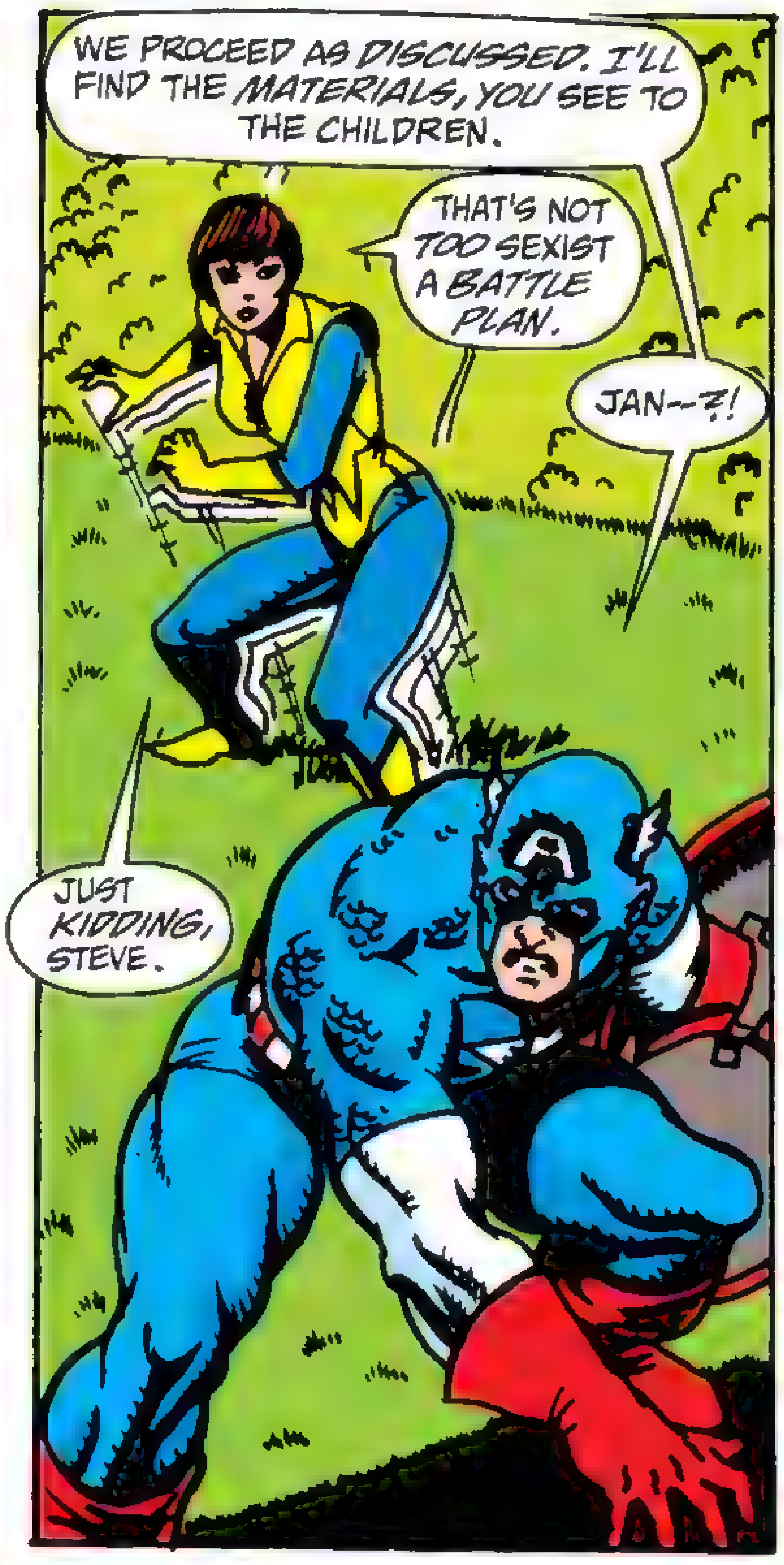

THE RECLUSIVE WEAPONS MANUFACTURER?!
THAT EXPLAINS THE "HE"--MAYBE EVEN THE "CRAZY" ASPECT-- BUT WHAT CHILDREN WERE SHE REFERRING TO?
IT TOOK A LOT OF DIGGING--FROM THE DMV TO HOSPITAL RECORDS ACROSS THE GLOBE...
...BUT TEN YEARS AGO, IN SWITZERLAND, MS. EHMAN GAVE BIRTH TO A SET OF QUINTUPLETS!
APPARENTLY, BERTICHEV IS RAISING THEM ON HIS ESTATE.
THAT CAN'T BE THE HEALTHIEST ENVIRONMENT IN THE WORLD.
ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THIS:
FAA RECORDS INDICATE BERDITCHEV RETURNED FROM A TRIP TO HIS NATIVE AUSTRIA ON MONDAY.
ONE WEEK AFTER THAT SAME COUNTRY CLAIMED SOMEONE HAD STOLEN A STOCK PILE OF PLUTONIUM!
I BELIEVE HEIDI LEARNED HE WAS PLANNING TO CREATE A NUCLEAR BOMB...
...AND SHE WAS TRYING TO PROTECT HER CHILDREN.
BERDITCHEV IS A POWERFUL MAN.
SHE PROBABLY FELT NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE HER.
SO SHE RISKED HER LIFE TO TRY TO CONTACT US.
ANYONE UP FOR A VISIT TO THE HOME OF THE "CONCERNED HUSBAND AND FATHER?"
WE HAVE TO BE SUBTLE. WE WOULDN'T WANT THE CHILDREN HURT.
THAT, AND WE NEED TO LOCATE THE PLUTONIUM BEFORE HE CAN HAVE IT MOVED.
BERDITCHEV IS A SMALL ARMS MANUFACTURER...
...I'M SURE HE'D AGREE TO MEET SIR ARMOND CARLYLE III, ENGLAND'S WEALTHIEST GUN RUNNER.
GUN RUNNING? WHAT AN UNDIGNIFIED LINE OF WORK.
I'M SURE YOU'LL GET USED TO IT... ...ARMOND.

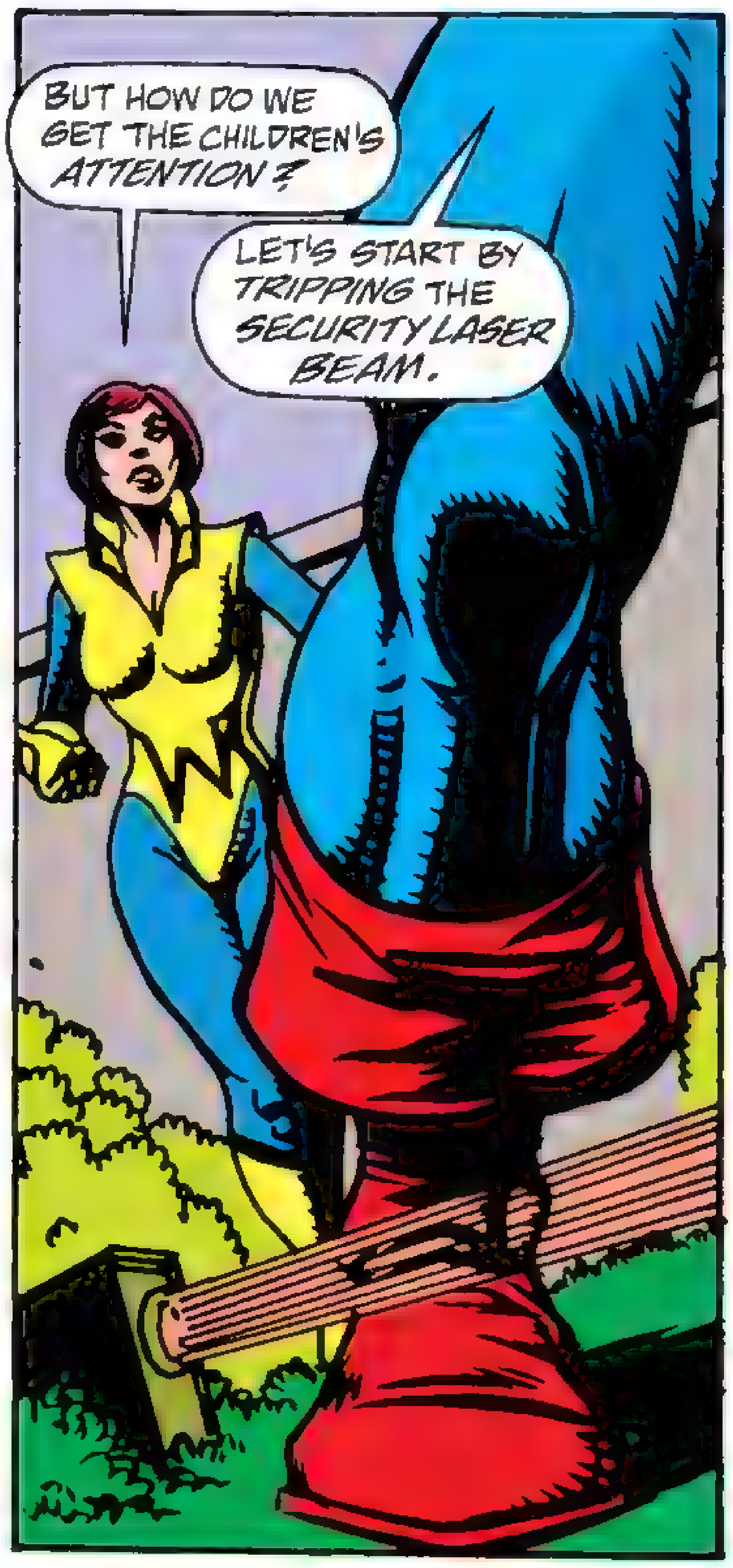

SEVERAL HOURS LATER, JUST AFTER DAWN...
NOT EXACTLY WHAT I'D CALL "HOME SWEET HOME."
I'VE LIVED ON ARMY BASES THAT HAD MORE WARMTH.
WHAT KIND OF MAN USES HIS OWN CHILDREN--
--AS HIS PRIVATE SECURITY FORCE?!
A VERY SICK MAN.
TRUE. BUT WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LET OUR EMOTIONS GET THE BETTER OF US.
OUR FIRST PRIORITY IS TO FIND THE PLUTONIUM.
HALT.
IDENTIFY YOURSELF.

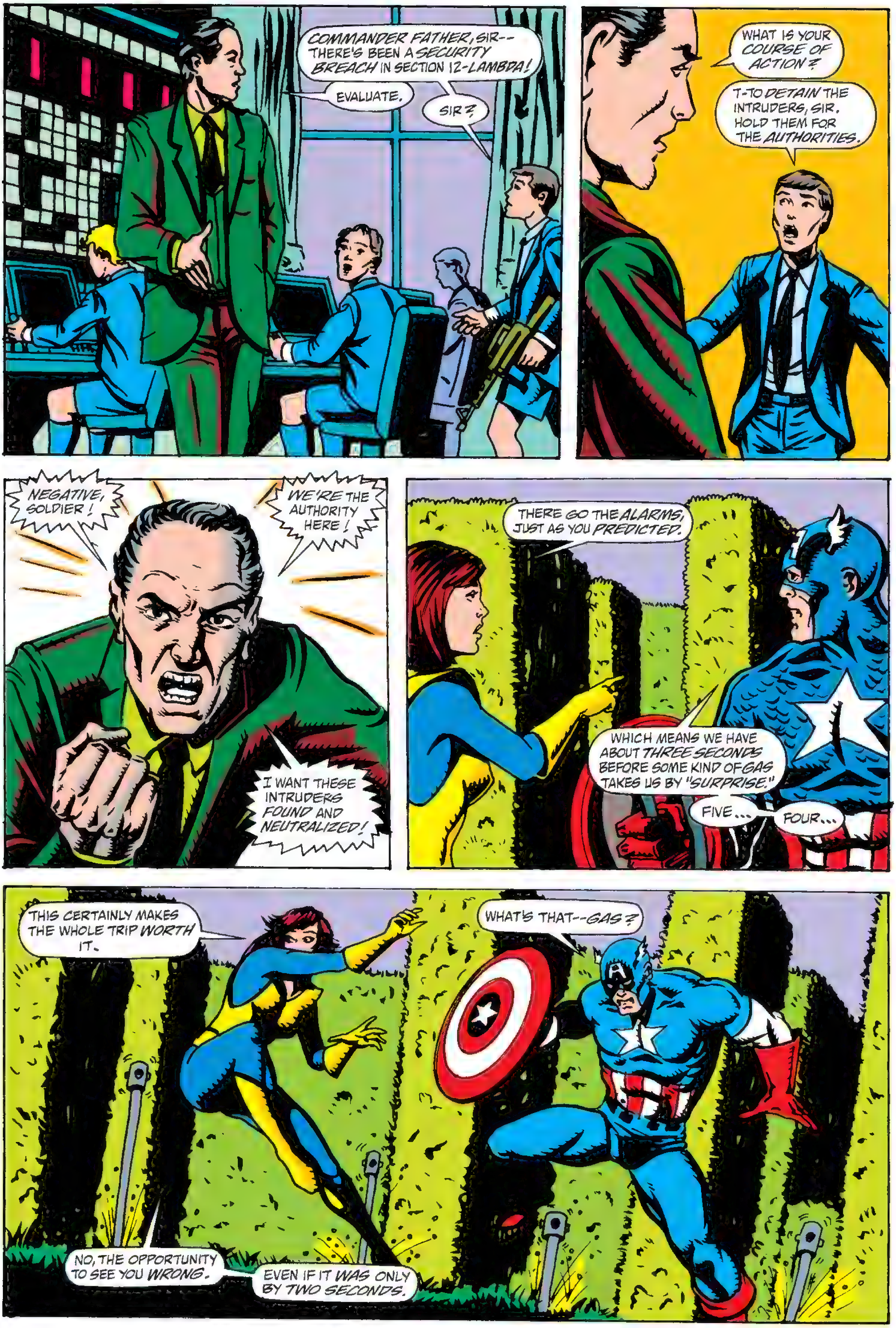

GREETINGS, *LITTLE FELLOW*. I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR *FATHER*.
MR. BERDITCHEV IS EXPECTING YOU.
CALL ME "*LITTLE FELLOW*" AGAIN AND I WILL *KILL* YOU.
HA HA. YES, *OF COURSE* YOU WILL.
I SUPPOSE YOU'LL USE THAT *QUAINT* LITTLE "*RAY GUN*" OF YOURS TO DO THE JOB?
THIS "*TOY*" PACKS ENOUGH ELECTROMAGNETIC ENERGY TO PUT *HAIR* BACK ON THAT *BALD HEAD* OF YOURS.

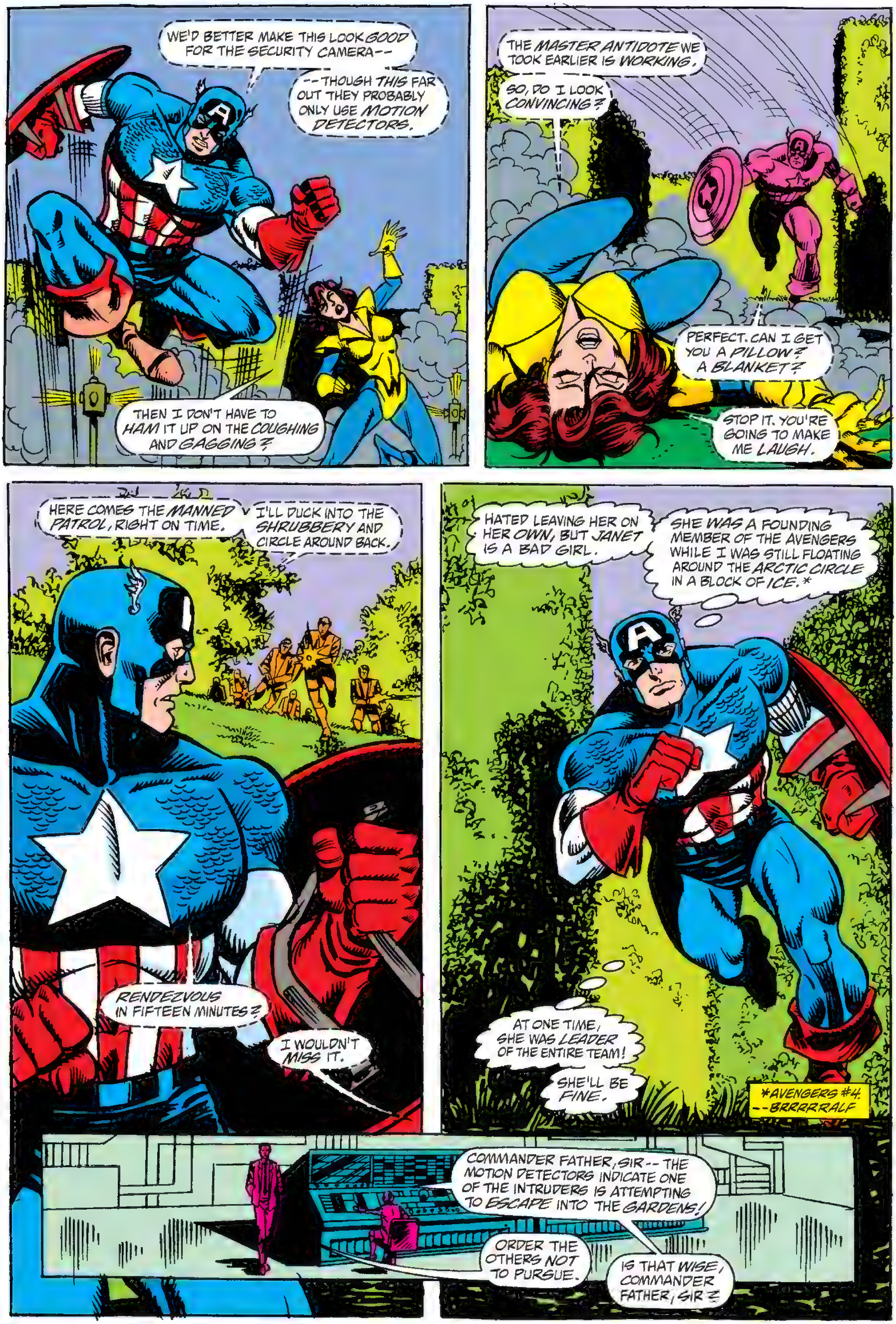

NOW, IF WE'RE THROUGH WITH THE *PLEASANTRIES* --
--YOU'RE ALREADY *THIRTY SECONDS* LATE.
2 RICH

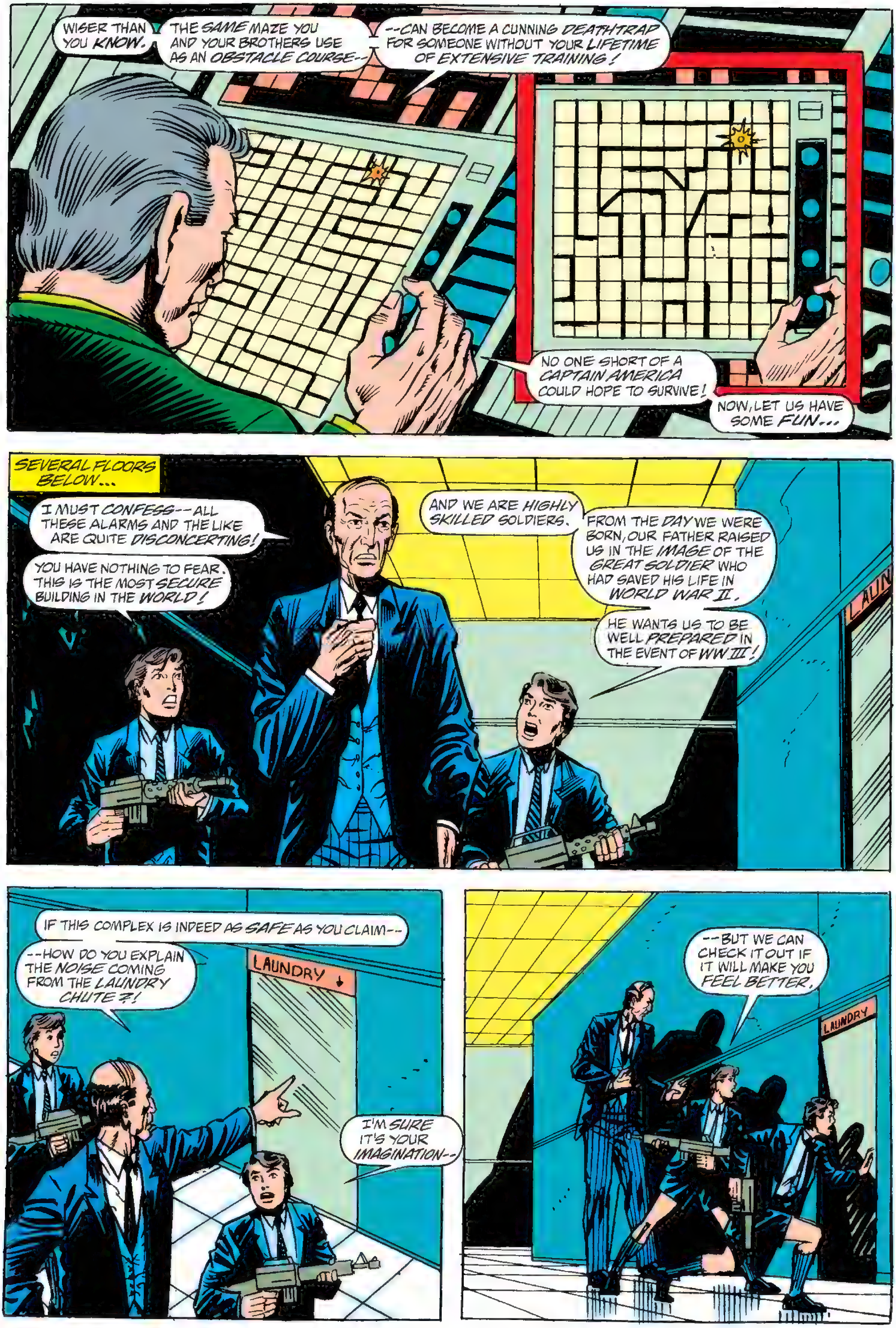

SHOULDN'T *ONE* OF US BE SHOUTING *AVENGERS ASSEMBLE*?
NOT UNLESS WE WANT TO CALL ATTENTION TO OURSELVES *SOONER* THAN WE WOULD HAVE LIKED.

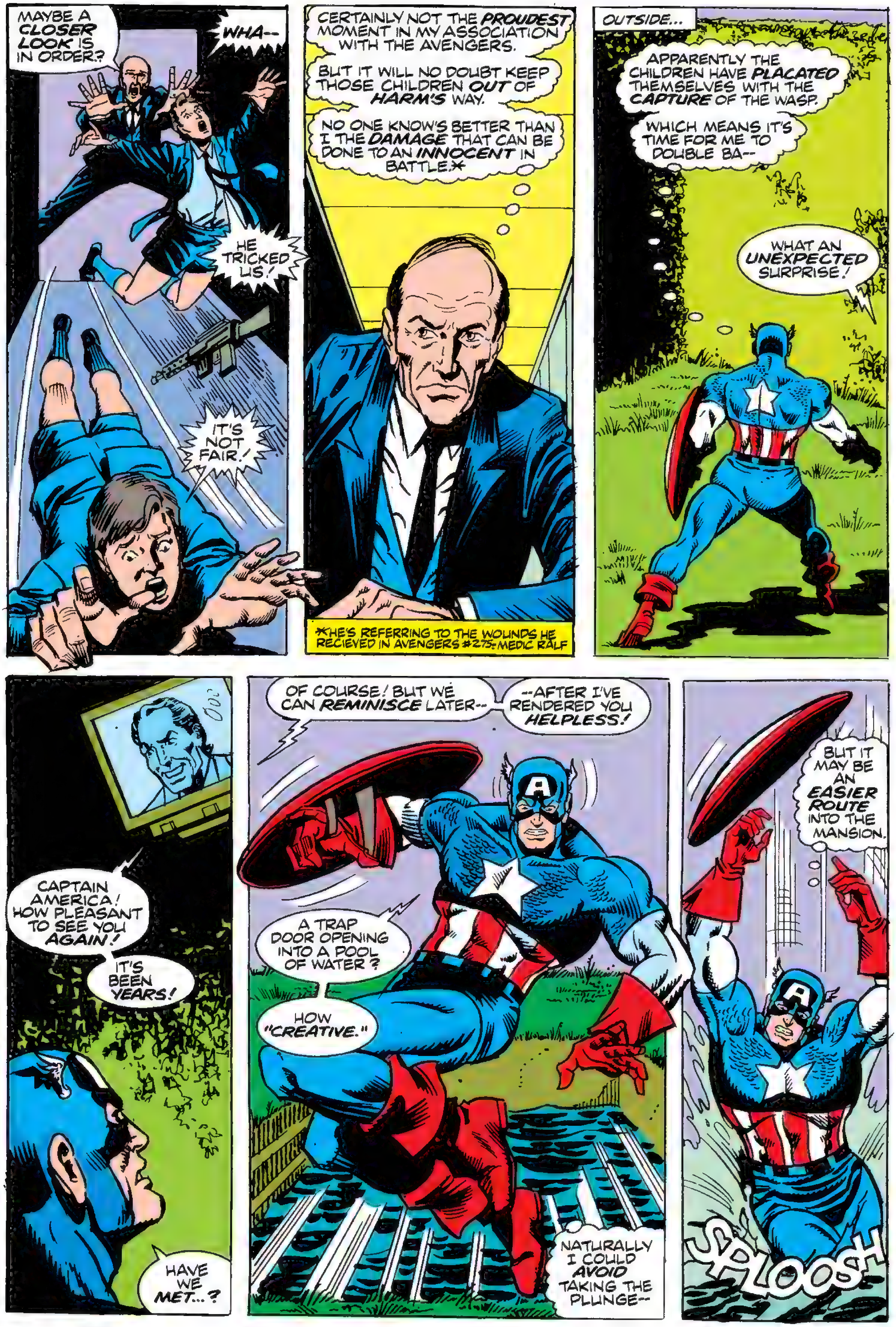

WE PROCEED AS *DISCUSSED*. *I'LL* FIND THE *MATERIALS*, *YOU* SEE TO THE CHILDREN.
THAT'S NOT *TOO* SEXIST A *BATTLE PLAN*.
JAN--?!
JUST *KIDDING*, STEVE.

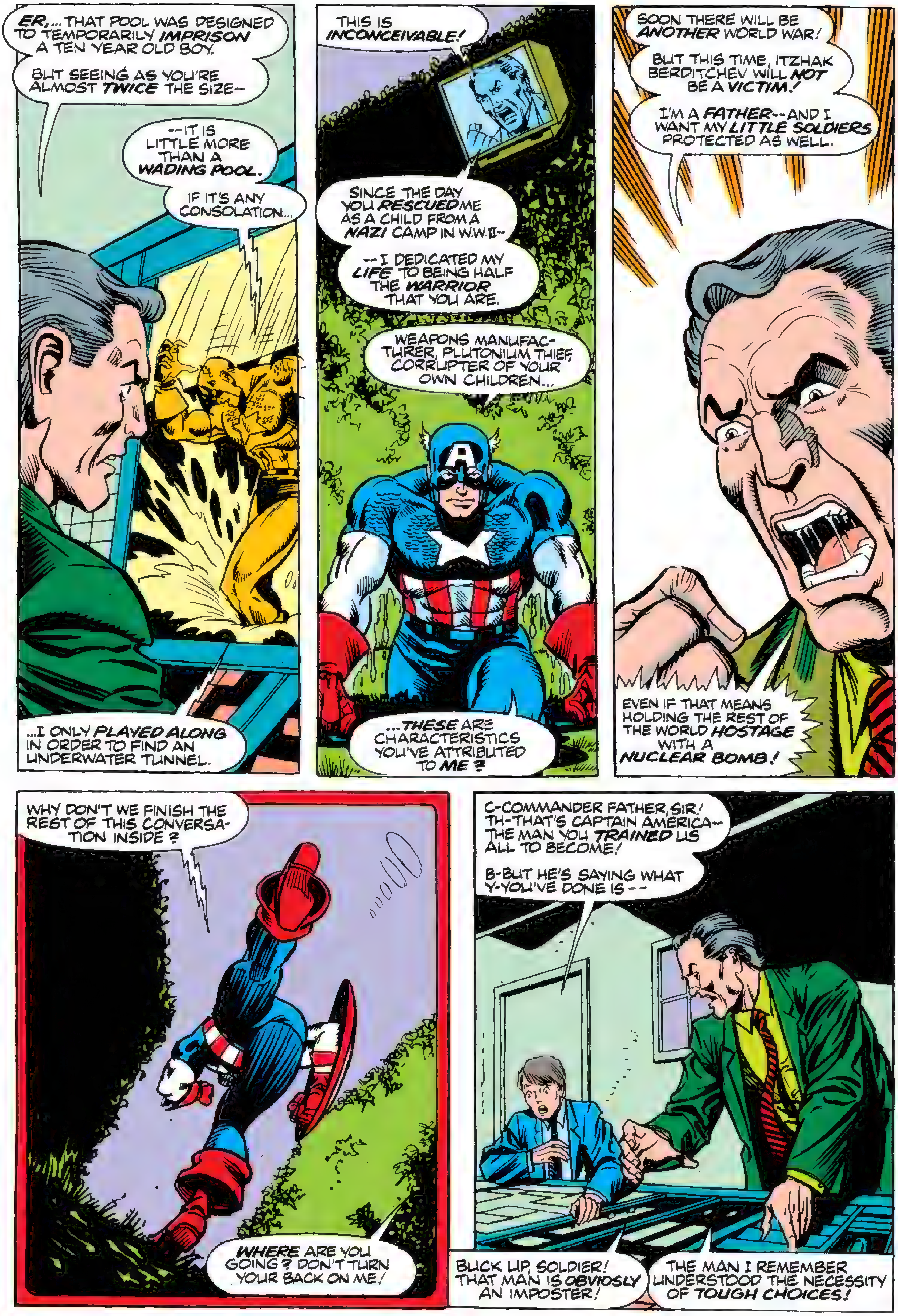

BUT HOW DO WE GET THE CHILDREN'S *ATTENTION*?
LET'S START BY *TRIPPING* THE *SECURITY LASER BEAM*.

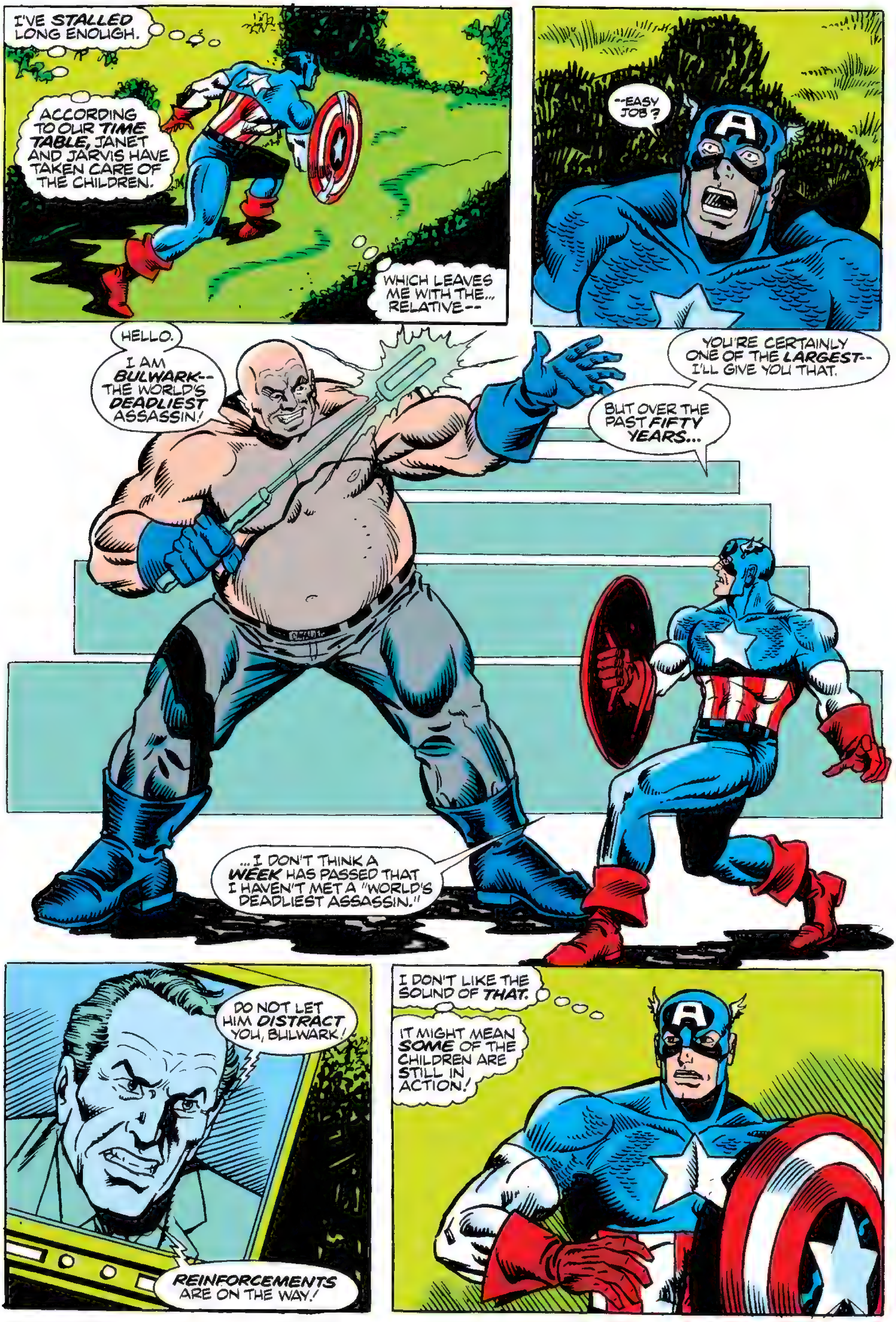

COMMANDER FATHER, SIR-- THERE'S BEEN A SECURITY BREACH IN SECTION 12-LAMBDA!
EVALUATE.
SIR?
WHAT IS YOUR COURSE OF ACTION?
T-TO DETAIN THE INTRUDERS, SIR. HOLD THEM FOR THE AUTHORITIES.
NEGATIVE, SOLDIER!
WE'RE THE AUTHORITY HERE!
I WANT THESE INTRUDERS FOUND AND NEUTRALIZED!
THERE GO THE ALARMS, JUST AS YOU PREDICTED.
WHICH MEANS WE HAVE ABOUT THREE SECONDS BEFORE SOME KIND OF GAS TAKES US BY "SURPRISE."
FIVE...
FOUR...
THIS CERTAINLY MAKES THE WHOLE TRIP WORTH IT.
WHAT'S THAT--GAS?
NO, THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE YOU WRONG.
EVEN IF IT WAS ONLY BY TWO SECONDS.

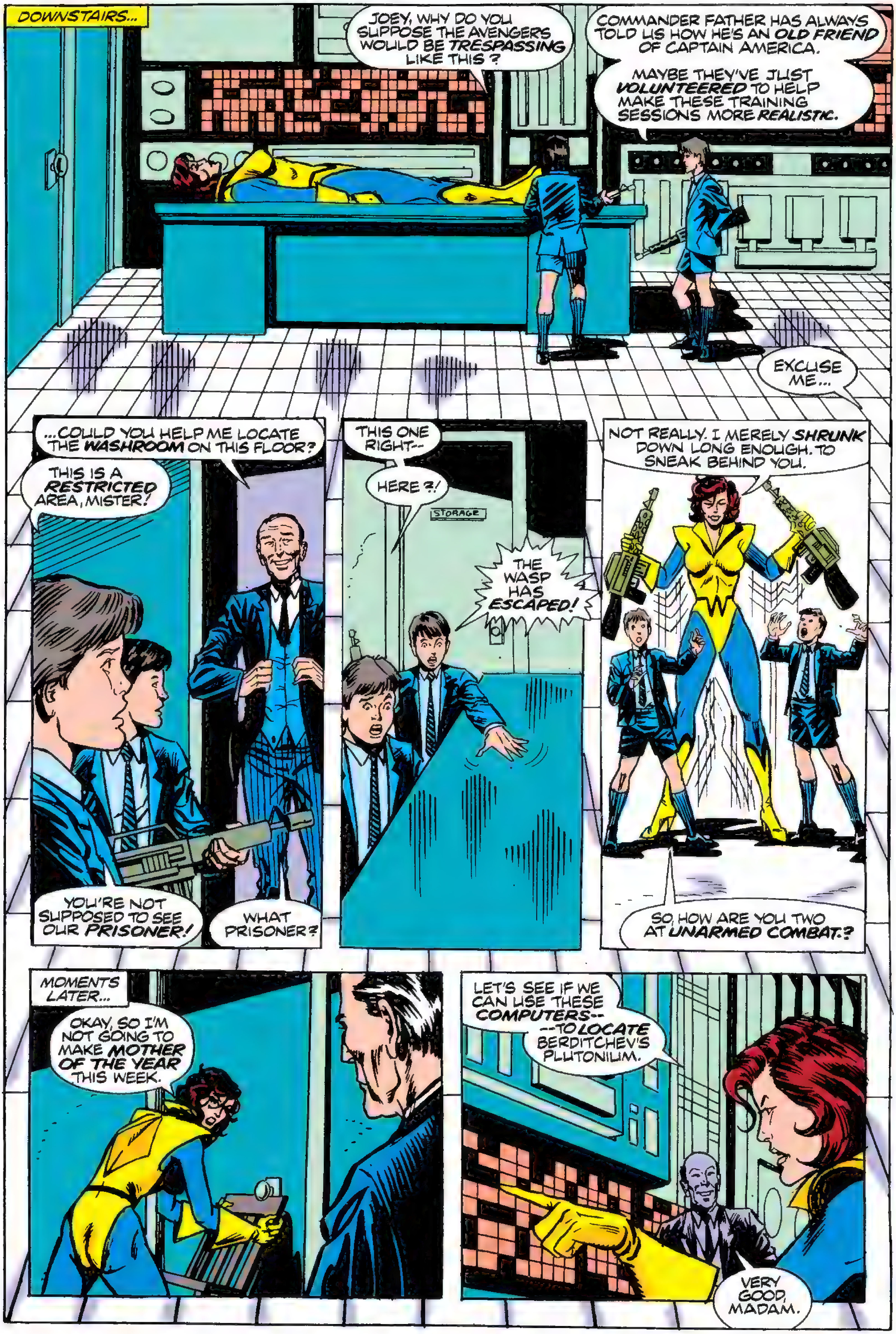

WE'D BETTER MAKE THIS LOOK GOOD FOR THE SECURITY CAMERA--
--THOUGH THIS FAR OUT THEY PROBABLY ONLY USE MOTION DETECTORS.
THEN I DON'T HAVE TO HAM IT UP ON THE COUGHING AND GAGGING?
THE MASTER ANTIDOTE WE TOOK EARLIER IS WORKING.
SO, DO I LOOK CONVINCING?
PERFECT. CAN I GET YOU A PILLOW? A BLANKET?
STOP IT. YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE ME LAUGH.
HERE COMES THE MANNED PATROL, RIGHT ON TIME.
I'LL DUCK INTO THE SHRUBBERY AND CIRCLE AROUND BACK.
RENDEZVOUS IN FIFTEEN MINUTES?
I WOULDN'T MISS IT.
HATED LEAVING HER ON HER OWN, BUT JANET IS A BAD GIRL.
SHE WAS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE AVENGERS WHILE I WAS STILL FLOATING AROUND THE ARCTIC CIRCLE IN A BLOCK OF ICE.*
AT ONE TIME, SHE WAS LEADER OF THE ENTIRE TEAM!
SHE'LL BE FINE.
*AVENGERS #4. --BRRRRRALF
COMMANDER FATHER, SIR-- THE MOTION DETECTORS INDICATE ONE OF THE INTRUDERS IS ATTEMPTING TO ESCAPE INTO THE GARDENS!
ORDER THE OTHERS NOT TO PURSUE.
IS THAT WISE, COMMANDER FATHER, SIR?

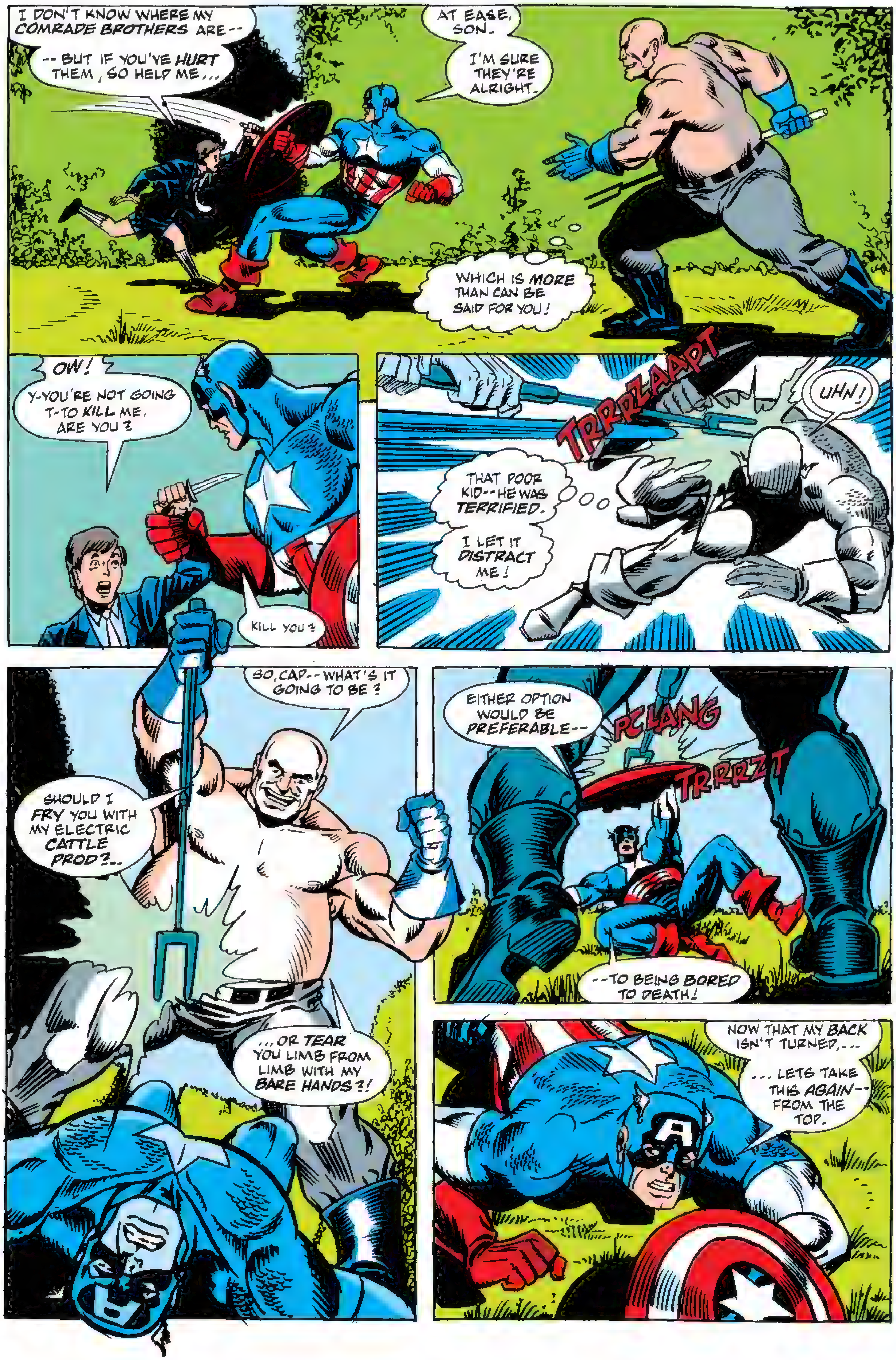

WISER THAN YOU *KNOW*.
THE *SAME* MAZE YOU AND YOUR BROTHERS USE AS AN *OBSTACLE COURSE*--
--CAN BECOME A CUNNING *DEATHTRAP* FOR SOMEONE WITHOUT YOUR *LIFETIME* OF *EXTENSIVE TRAINING*!
NO ONE SHORT OF A *CAPTAIN AMERICA* COULD HOPE TO SURVIVE!
NOW, LET US HAVE SOME *FUN*...
SEVERAL FLOORS BELOW...
I MUST *CONFESS*--ALL THESE ALARMS AND THE LIKE ARE QUITE *DISCONCERTING*!
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR. THIS IS THE MOST *SECURE* BUILDING IN THE *WORLD*!
AND WE ARE *HIGHLY SKILLED* SOLDIERS.
FROM THE *DAY* WE WERE BORN, OUR FATHER RAISED US IN THE *IMAGE* OF THE *GREAT SOLDIER* WHO HAD SAVED HIS LIFE IN *WORLD WAR II*.
HE WANTS US TO BE WELL *PREPARED* IN THE EVENT OF *WW III*!
LAUN
IF THIS COMPLEX IS INDEED AS *SAFE* AS YOU CLAIM--
--HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE *NOISE* COMING FROM THE *LAUNDRY CHUTE*?!
LAUNDRY ↓
I'M *SURE* IT'S YOUR *IMAGINATION*--
--BUT WE CAN CHECK IT OUT IF IT WILL MAKE YOU *FEEL BETTER*.
LAUNDRY

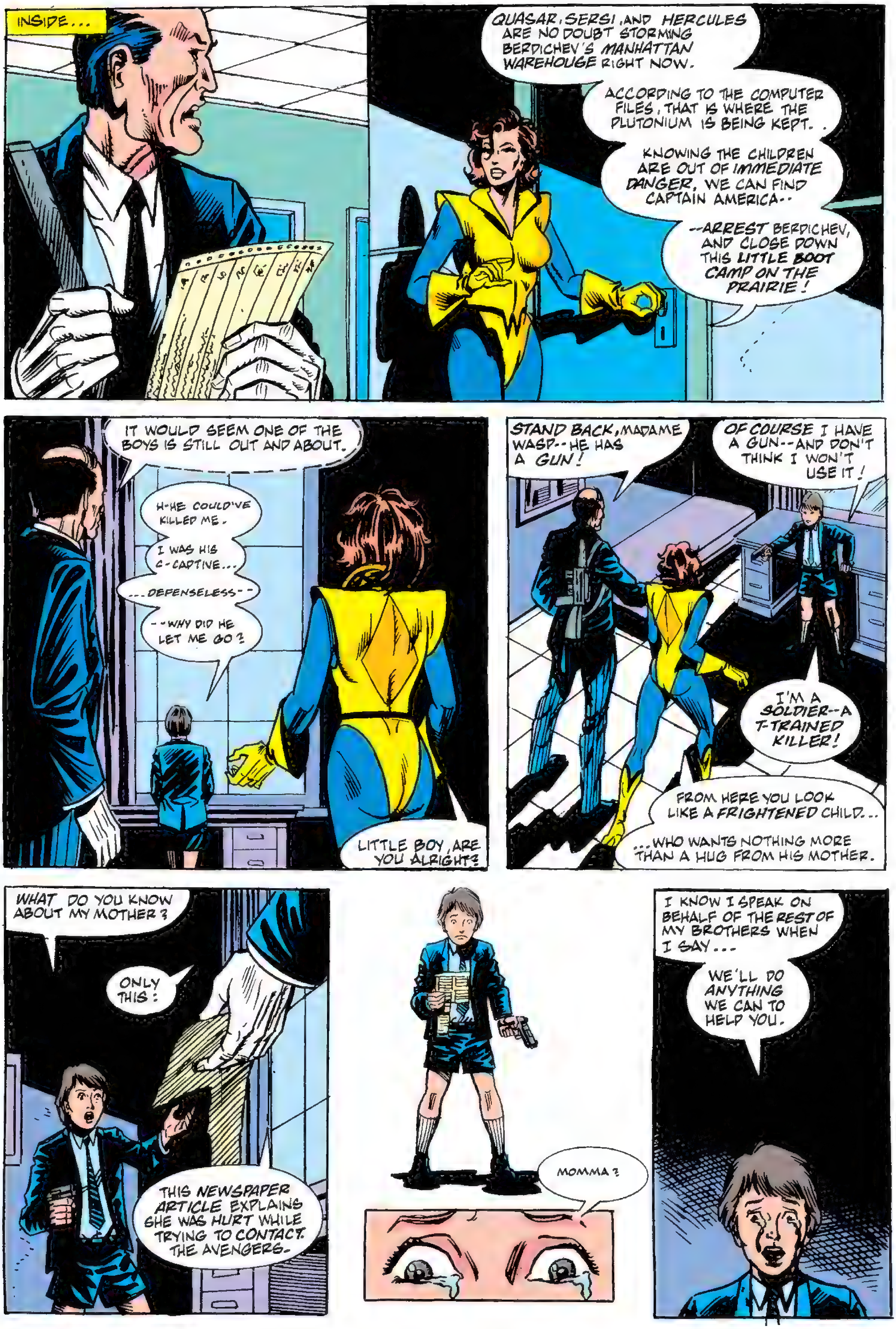

MAYBE A **CLOSER LOOK** IS IN ORDER?
WHA--
HE TRICKED US!
IT'S NOT FAIR!
CERTAINLY NOT THE **PROUDEST** MOMENT IN MY ASSOCIATION WITH THE AVENGERS.
BUT IT WILL NO DOUBT KEEP THOSE CHILDREN **OUT** OF **HARM'S** WAY.
NO ONE KNOW'S BETTER THAN I THE **DAMAGE** THAT CAN BE DONE TO AN **INNOCENT** IN BATTLE.*
*HE'S REFERRING TO THE WOUNDS HE RECIEVED IN AVENGERS #275.-MEDIC RALF
OUTSIDE...
APPARENTLY THE CHILDREN HAVE **PLACATED** THEMSELVES WITH THE **CAPTURE** OF THE WASP.
WHICH MEANS IT'S TIME FOR ME TO DOUBLE BA--
WHAT AN **UNEXPECTED** SURPRISE!
CAPTAIN AMERICA! HOW PLEASANT TO SEE YOU **AGAIN!**
IT'S BEEN **YEARS!**
HAVE WE **MET...?**
OF COURSE! BUT WE CAN **REMINISCE** LATER--
--AFTER I'VE RENDERED YOU **HELPLESS!**
A TRAP DOOR OPENING INTO A POOL OF WATER?
HOW **"CREATIVE."**
NATURALLY I COULD **AVOID** TAKING THE PLUNGE--
BUT IT MAY BE AN **EASIER ROUTE** INTO THE MANSION.
SPLOOSH

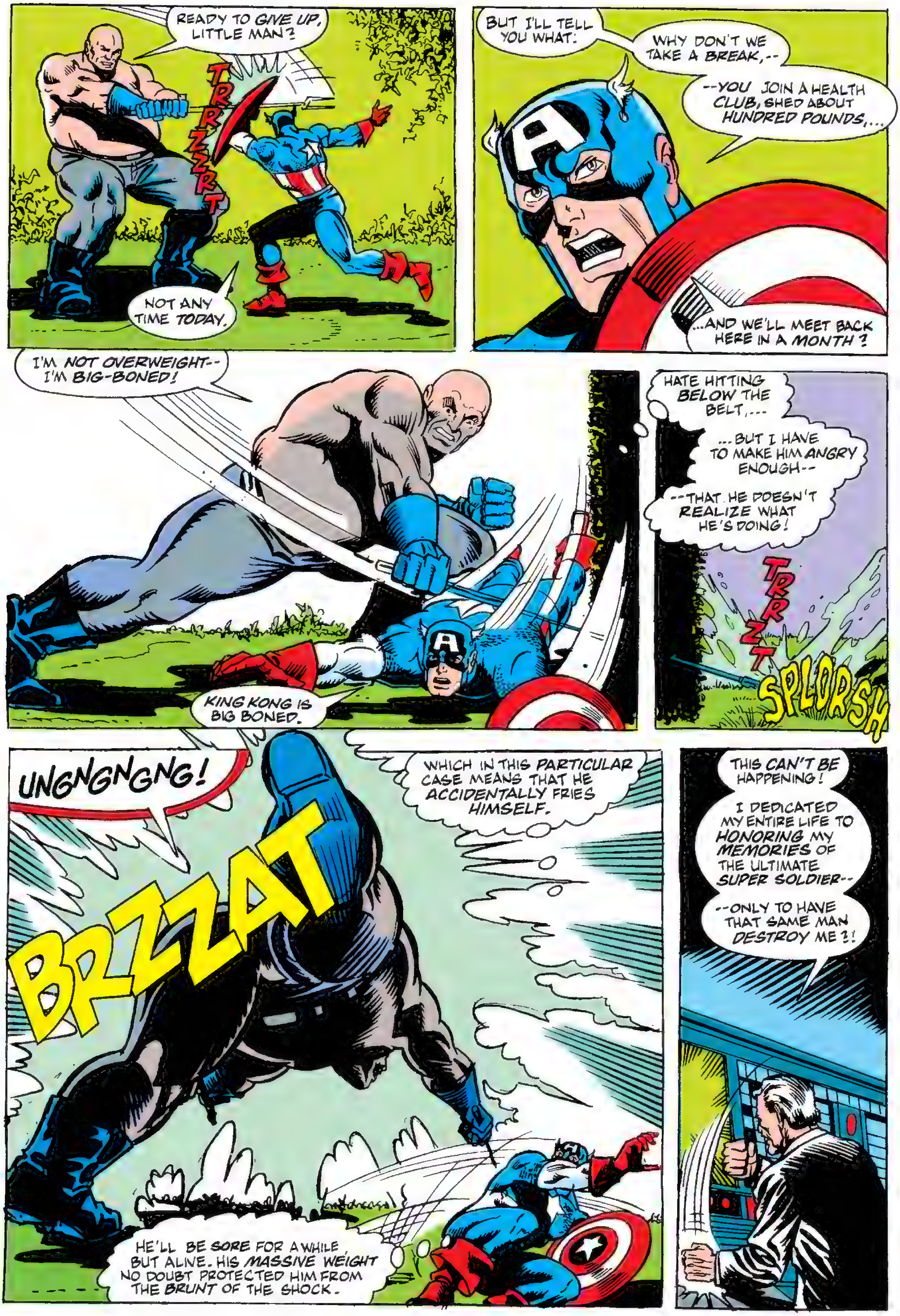

ER,... THAT POOL WAS DESIGNED TO TEMPORARILY IMPRISON A TEN YEAR OLD BOY.
BUT SEEING AS YOU'RE ALMOST TWICE THE SIZE--
--IT IS LITTLE MORE THAN A WADING POOL.
IF IT'S ANY CONSOLATION...
...I ONLY PLAYED ALONG IN ORDER TO FIND AN UNDERWATER TUNNEL.
THIS IS INCONCEIVABLE!
SINCE THE DAY YOU RESCUED ME AS A CHILD FROM A NAZI CAMP IN W.W.II--
--I DEDICATED MY LIFE TO BEING HALF THE WARRIOR THAT YOU ARE.
WEAPONS MANUFACTURER, PLUTONIUM THIEF, CORRUPTER OF YOUR OWN CHILDREN...
...THESE ARE CHARACTERISTICS YOU'VE ATTRIBUTED TO ME?
SOON THERE WILL BE ANOTHER WORLD WAR!
BUT THIS TIME, ITZHAK BERDITCHEV WILL NOT BE A VICTIM!
I'M A FATHER--AND I WANT MY LITTLE SOLDIERS PROTECTED AS WELL.
EVEN IF THAT MEANS HOLDING THE REST OF THE WORLD HOSTAGE WITH A NUCLEAR BOMB!
WHY DON'T WE FINISH THE REST OF THIS CONVERSATION INSIDE?
WHERE ARE YOU GOING? DON'T TURN YOUR BACK ON ME!
C-COMMANDER FATHER, SIR! TH-THAT'S CAPTAIN AMERICA-- THE MAN YOU TRAINED US ALL TO BECOME!
B-BUT HE'S SAYING WHAT Y-YOU'VE DONE IS--
BUCK UP, SOLDIER! THAT MAN IS OBVIOSLY AN IMPOSTER!
THE MAN I REMEMBER UNDERSTOOD THE NECESSITY OF TOUGH CHOICES!

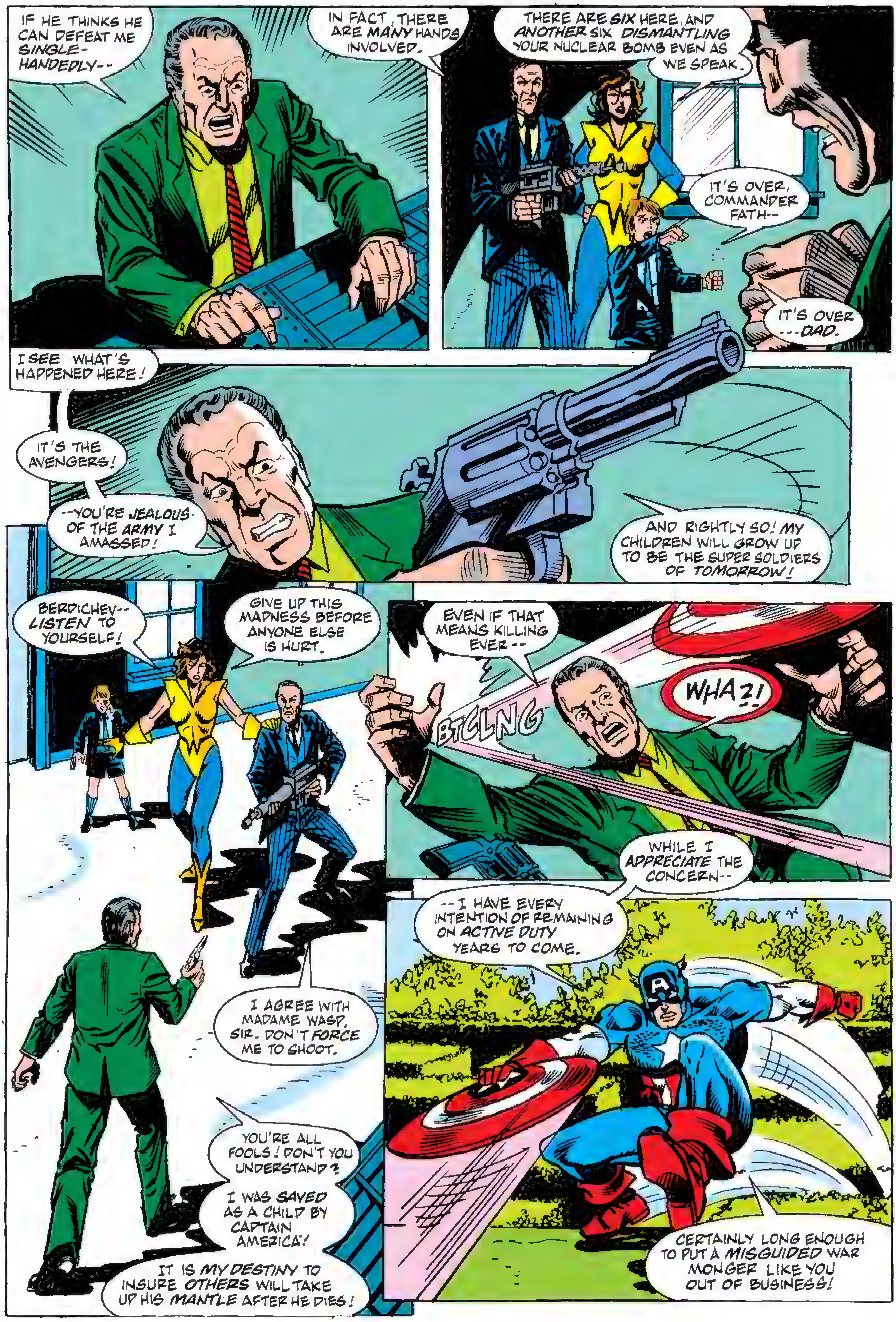

I'VE **STALLED** LONG ENOUGH.
ACCORDING TO OUR **TIME TABLE,** JANET AND JARVIS HAVE TAKEN CARE OF THE CHILDREN.
WHICH LEAVES ME WITH THE... RELATIVE--
--EASY JOB?
HELLO.
I AM **BULWARK**--THE WORLD'S **DEADLIEST** ASSASSIN!
YOU'RE CERTAINLY ONE OF THE **LARGEST**--I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.
BUT OVER THE PAST **FIFTY YEARS...**
...I DON'T THINK A **WEEK** HAS PASSED THAT I HAVEN'T MET A "WORLD'S DEADLIEST ASSASSIN."
DO NOT LET HIM **DISTRACT** YOU, BULWARK!
REINFORCEMENTS ARE ON THE WAY!
I DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF **THAT.**
IT MIGHT MEAN **SOME** OF THE CHILDREN ARE STILL IN ACTION!

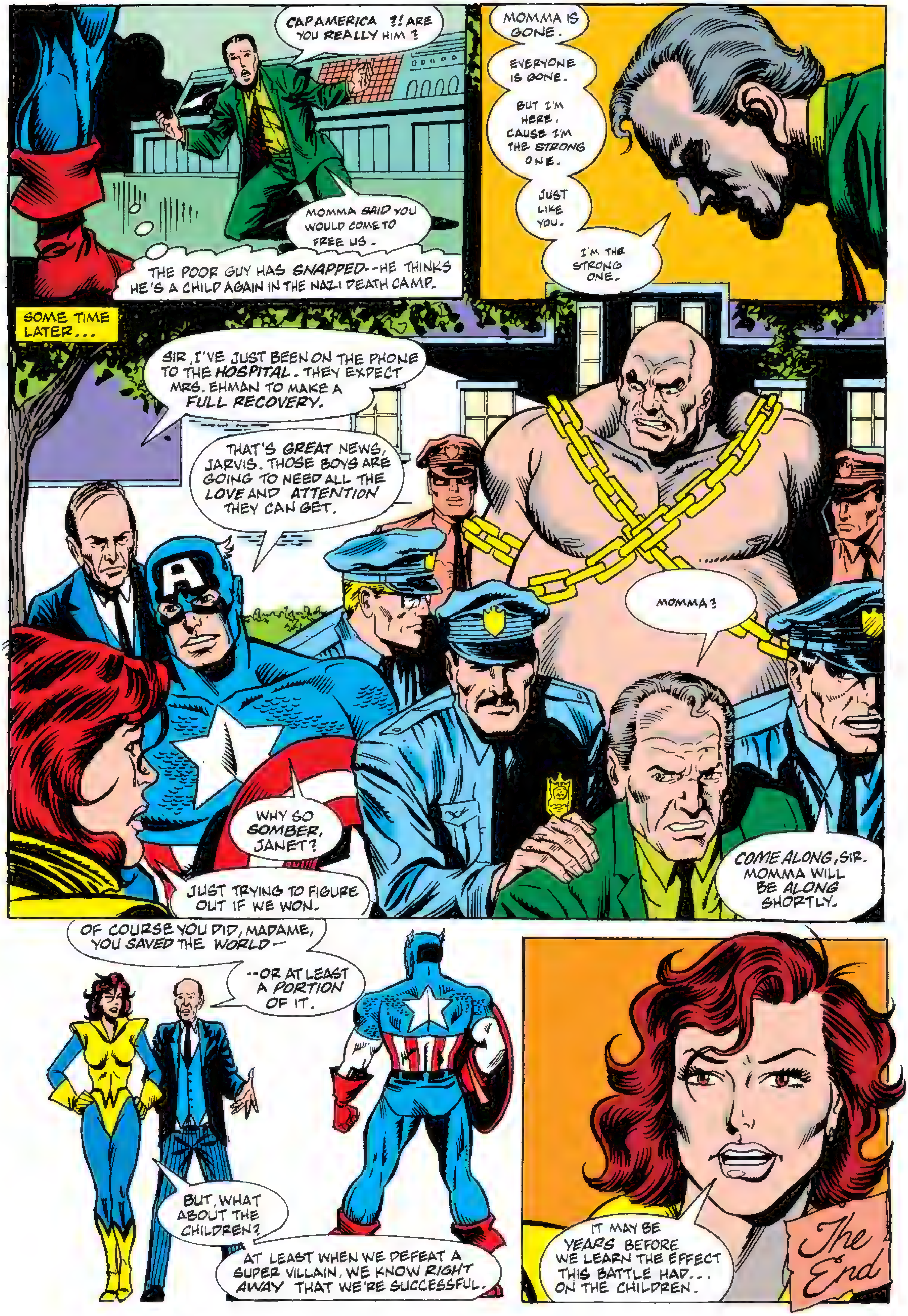

DOWNSTAIRS...
JOEY, WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE THE AVENGERS WOULD BE TRESPASSING LIKE THIS?
COMMANDER FATHER HAS ALWAYS TOLD US HOW HE'S AN OLD FRIEND OF CAPTAIN AMERICA.
MAYBE THEY'VE JUST VOLUNTEERED TO HELP MAKE THESE TRAINING SESSIONS MORE REALISTIC.
EXCUSE ME...
...COULD YOU HELP ME LOCATE THE WASHROOM ON THIS FLOOR?
THIS IS A RESTRICTED AREA, MISTER!
YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO SEE OUR PRISONER!
WHAT PRISONER?
THIS ONE RIGHT--
HERE ?!
STORAGE
THE WASP HAS ESCAPED!
NOT REALLY. I MERELY SHRUNK DOWN LONG ENOUGH TO SNEAK BEHIND YOU.
SO, HOW ARE YOU TWO AT UNARMED COMBAT?
MOMENTS LATER...
OKAY, SO I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE MOTHER OF THE YEAR THIS WEEK.
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN USE THESE COMPUTERS--
--TO LOCATE BERDITCHEV'S PLUTONIUM.
VERY GOOD, MADAM.


I DON'T KNOW WHERE MY COMRADE BROTHERS ARE--
--BUT IF YOU'VE HURT THEM, SO HELP ME...
AT EASE, SON.
I'M SURE THEY'RE ALRIGHT.
WHICH IS MORE THAN CAN BE SAID FOR YOU!
OW!
Y-YOU'RE NOT GOING T-TO KILL ME, ARE YOU?
KILL YOU?
TRRRZAAPT
UHN!
THAT POOR KID--HE WAS TERRIFIED.
I LET IT DISTRACT ME!
SO, CAP--WHAT'S IT GOING TO BE?
SHOULD I FRY YOU WITH MY ELECTRIC CATTLE PROD?..
...OR TEAR YOU LIMB FROM LIMB WITH MY BARE HANDS?!
EITHER OPTION WOULD BE PREFERABLE--
PCLANG
TRRRZT
--TO BEING BORED TO DEATH!
NOW THAT MY BACK ISN'T TURNED...
...LETS TAKE THIS AGAIN--FROM THE TOP.


INSIDE...
QUASAR, SERSI, AND HERCULES ARE NO DOUBT STORMING BERDICHEV'S MANHATTAN WAREHOUSE RIGHT NOW.
ACCORDING TO THE COMPUTER FILES, THAT IS WHERE THE PLUTONIUM IS BEING KEPT.
KNOWING THE CHILDREN ARE OUT OF IMMEDIATE DANGER, WE CAN FIND CAPTAIN AMERICA--
--ARREST BERDICHEV, AND CLOSE DOWN THIS LITTLE BOOT CAMP ON THE PRAIRIE!
IT WOULD SEEM ONE OF THE BOYS IS STILL OUT AND ABOUT.
H-HE COULD'VE KILLED ME.
I WAS HIS C-CAPTIVE...
...DEFENSELESS--
--WHY DID HE LET ME GO?
LITTLE BOY, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
STAND BACK, MADAME WASP--HE HAS A GUN!
OF COURSE I HAVE A GUN--AND DON'T THINK I WON'T USE IT!
I'M A SOLDIER--A T-TRAINED KILLER!
FROM HERE YOU LOOK LIKE A FRIGHTENED CHILD...
...WHO WANTS NOTHING MORE THAN A HUG FROM HIS MOTHER.
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MY MOTHER?
ONLY THIS:
THIS NEWSPAPER ARTICLE EXPLAINS SHE WAS HURT WHILE TRYING TO CONTACT THE AVENGERS.
MOMMA?
I KNOW I SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE REST OF MY BROTHERS WHEN I SAY...
WE'LL DO ANYTHING WE CAN TO HELP YOU.

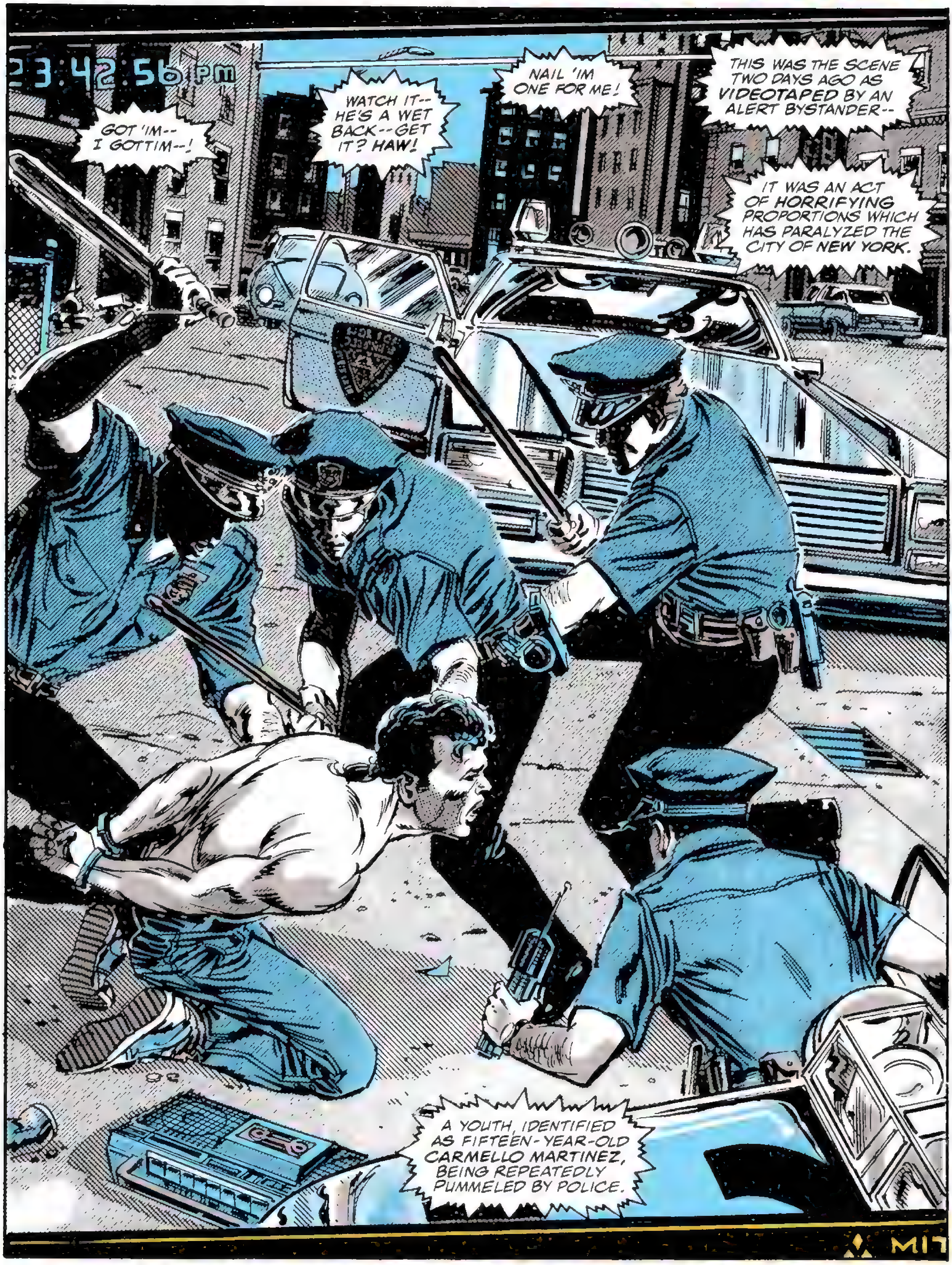

READY TO *GIVE UP*, LITTLE MAN?
TRRZZZRT
NOT ANY TIME *TODAY*.
BUT I'LL TELL YOU WHAT:
WHY DON'T WE TAKE A *BREAK*,--
--*YOU* JOIN A HEALTH *CLUB*, SHED ABOUT *HUNDRED POUNDS*,...
...AND WE'LL MEET BACK HERE IN A *MONTH*?
I'M *NOT OVERWEIGHT*-- I'M *BIG-BONED!*
KING KONG IS BIG BONED.
HATE HITTING *BELOW* THE BELT,---
...BUT I HAVE TO MAKE HIM *ANGRY* ENOUGH--
--THAT HE DOESN'T *REALIZE* WHAT HE'S DOING!
TRRZZT
SPLORSH
UNGNGNGNG!
WHICH IN THIS *PARTICULAR* CASE MEANS THAT HE *ACCIDENTALLY* FRIES *HIMSELF*.
BRZZAT
HE'LL BE *SORE* FOR A WHILE BUT ALIVE. HIS *MASSIVE* WEIGHT NO DOUBT PROTECTED HIM FROM THE *BRUNT* OF THE SHOCK.
THIS *CAN'T* BE HAPPENING!
I DEDICATED MY ENTIRE LIFE TO *HONORING* MY *MEMORIES* OF THE ULTIMATE *SUPER SOLDIER*--
--ONLY TO HAVE THAT *SAME* MAN *DESTROY* ME?!


IF HE THINKS HE CAN DEFEAT ME SINGLE-HANDEDLY--
IN FACT, THERE ARE MANY HANDS INVOLVED.
THERE ARE SIX HERE, AND ANOTHER SIX DISMANTLING YOUR NUCLEAR BOMB EVEN AS WE SPEAK.
IT'S OVER, COMMANDER FATH--
IT'S OVER ---DAD.
I SEE WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE!
IT'S THE AVENGERS!
--YOU'RE JEALOUS OF THE ARMY I AMASSED!
AND RIGHTLY SO! MY CHILDREN WILL GROW UP TO BE THE SUPER SOLDIERS OF TOMORROW!
BERDICHEV-- LISTEN TO YOURSELF!
GIVE UP THIS MADNESS BEFORE ANYONE ELSE IS HURT.
I AGREE WITH MADAME WASP, SIR. DON'T FORCE ME TO SHOOT.
YOU'RE ALL FOOLS! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?
I WAS SAVED AS A CHILD BY CAPTAIN AMERICA!
IT IS MY DESTINY TO INSURE OTHERS WILL TAKE UP HIS MANTLE AFTER HE DIES!
EVEN IF THAT MEANS KILLING EVER--
BTCLNG
WHA?!
WHILE I APPRECIATE THE CONCERN--
--I HAVE EVERY INTENTION OF REMAINING ON ACTIVE DUTY YEARS TO COME.
CERTAINLY LONG ENOUGH TO PUT A MISGUIDED WAR MONGER LIKE YOU OUT OF BUSINESS!

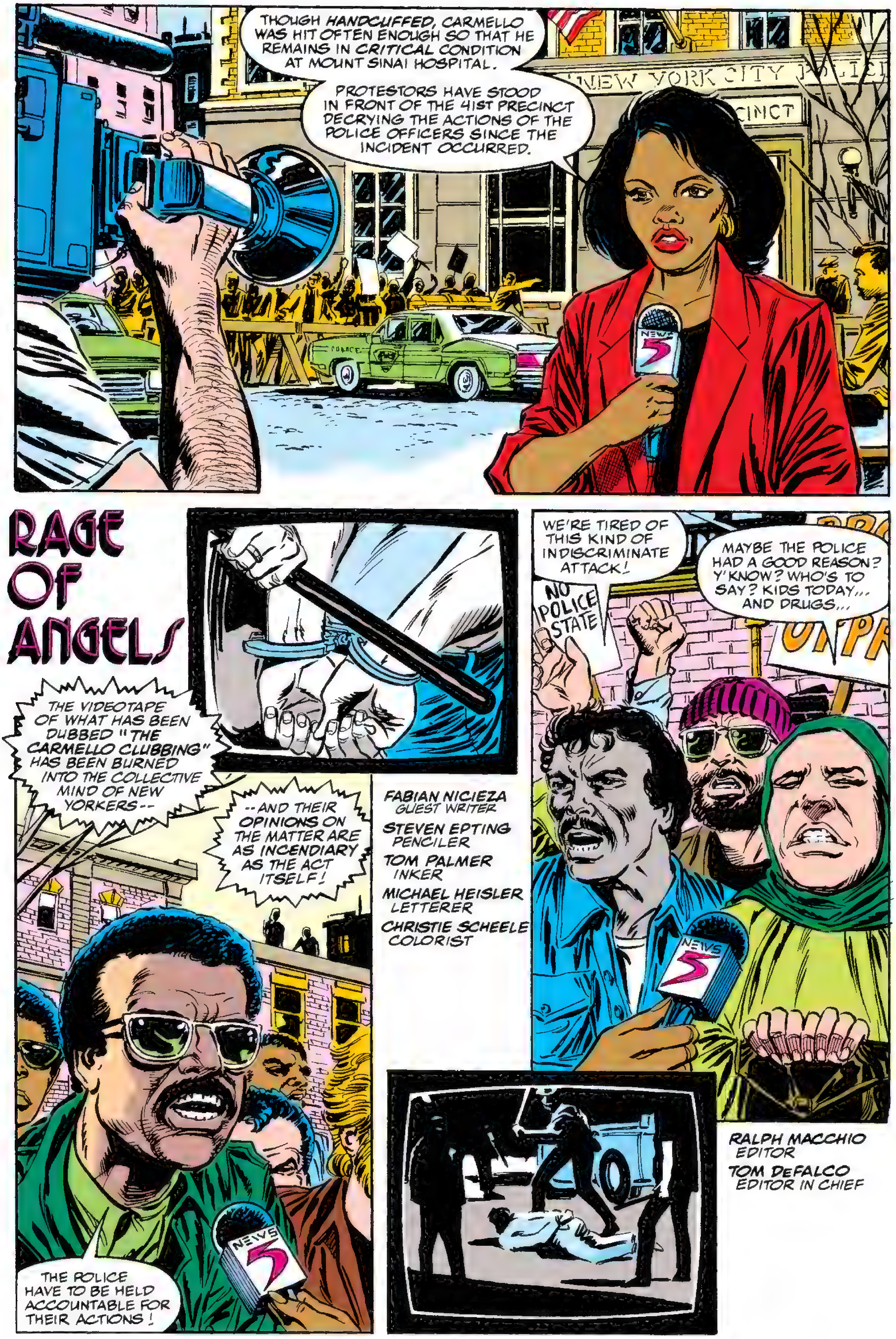

CAP AMERICA ?! ARE YOU REALLY HIM ?
MOMMA SAID YOU WOULD COME TO FREE US.
THE POOR GUY HAS SNAPPED--HE THINKS HE'S A CHILD AGAIN IN THE NAZI DEATH CAMP.
MOMMA IS GONE.
EVERYONE IS GONE.
BUT I'M HERE, CAUSE I'M THE STRONG ONE.
JUST LIKE YOU.
I'M THE STRONG ONE.
SOME TIME LATER...
SIR, I'VE JUST BEEN ON THE PHONE TO THE HOSPITAL. THEY EXPECT MRS. EHMAN TO MAKE A FULL RECOVERY.
THAT'S GREAT NEWS, JARVIS. THOSE BOYS ARE GOING TO NEED ALL THE LOVE AND ATTENTION THEY CAN GET.
MOMMA?
WHY SO SOMBER, JANET?
JUST TRYING TO FIGURE OUT IF WE WON.
COME ALONG, SIR. MOMMA WILL BE ALONG SHORTLY.
OF COURSE YOU DID, MADAME, YOU SAVED THE WORLD--
--OR AT LEAST A PORTION OF IT.
BUT, WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?
AT LEAST WHEN WE DEFEAT A SUPER VILLAIN, WE KNOW RIGHT AWAY THAT WE'RE SUCCESSFUL.
IT MAY BE YEARS BEFORE WE LEARN THE EFFECT THIS BATTLE HAD... ON THE CHILDREN.
The End

MARVEL COMICS
AVENGERS
© 1991 MARVEL ENT. GROUP, INC.
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN/UK 65p
341
NOV
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
NOW STRIKE
The SONS of the SERPENT!
GUEST-STARRING
THE NEW
WARRIORS

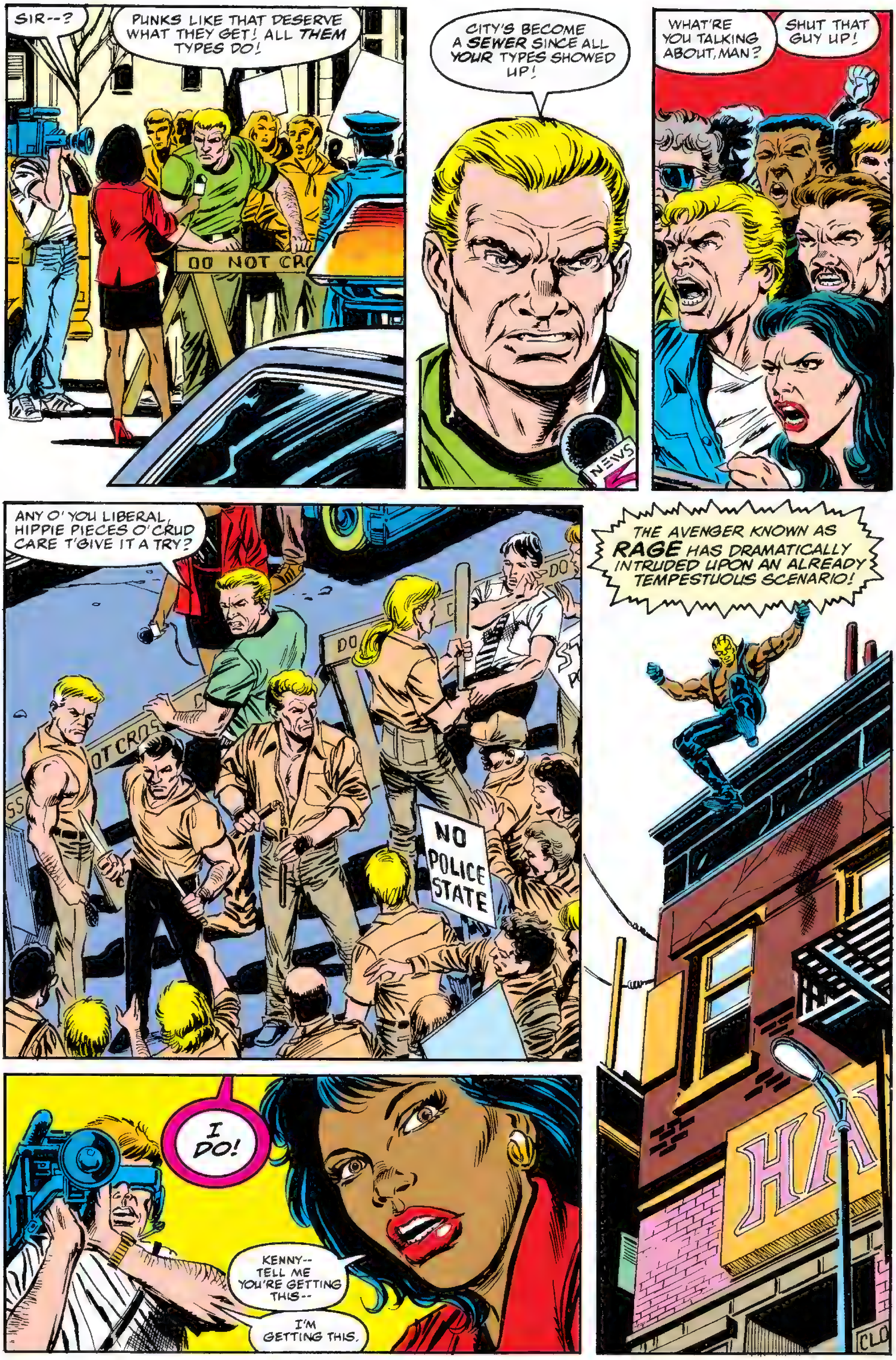
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

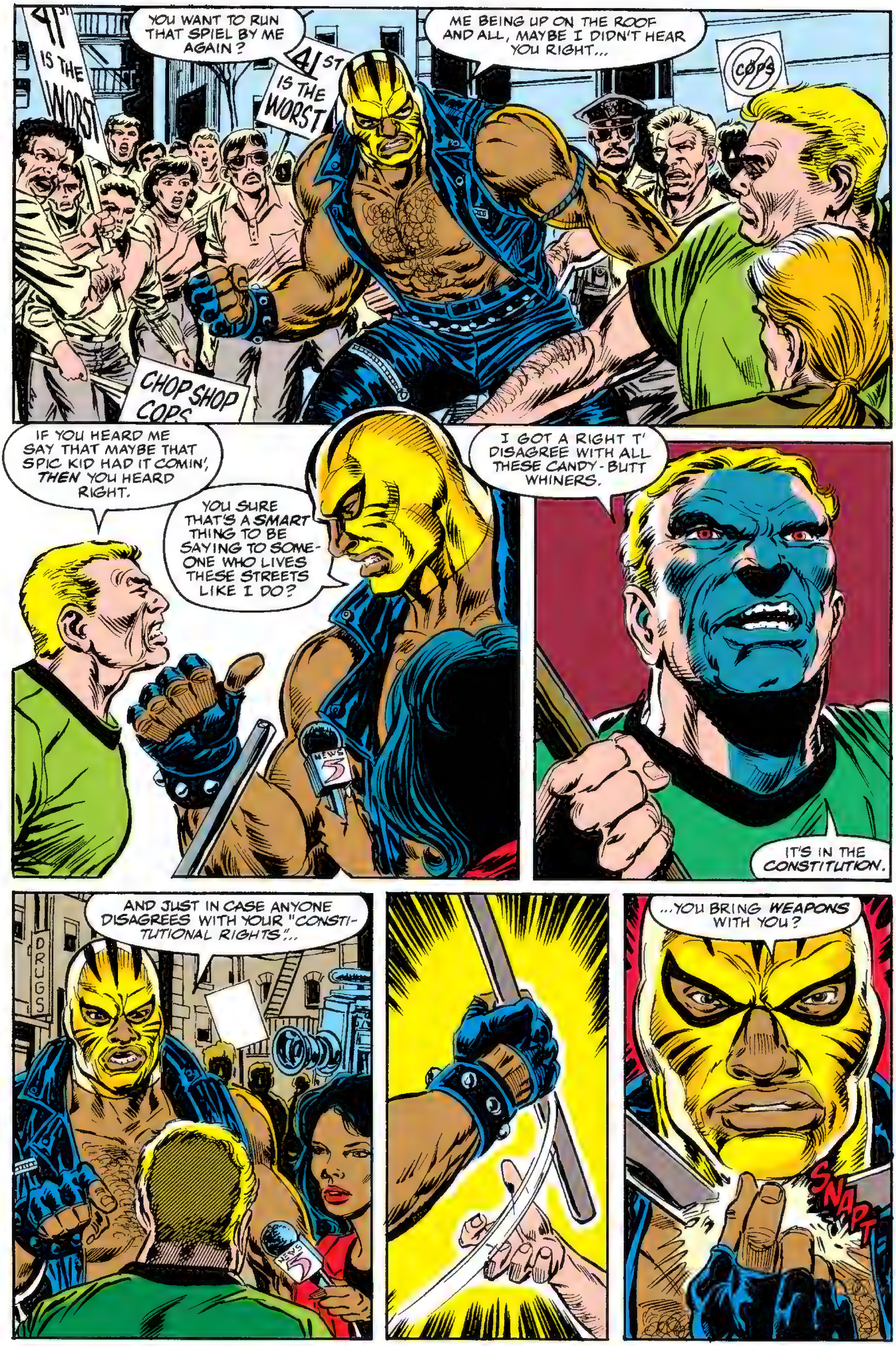

23:42:56 pm
GOT 'IM-- I GOTTIM--!
WATCH IT-- HE'S A WET BACK--GET IT? HAW!
NAIL 'IM ONE FOR ME!
THIS WAS THE SCENE TWO DAYS AGO AS VIDEOTAPED BY AN ALERT BYSTANDER--
IT WAS AN ACT OF HORRIFYING PROPORTIONS WHICH HAS PARALYZED THE CITY OF NEW YORK.
A YOUTH, IDENTIFIED AS FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD CARMELLO MARTINEZ, BEING REPEATEDLY PUMMELED BY POLICE.
MIT

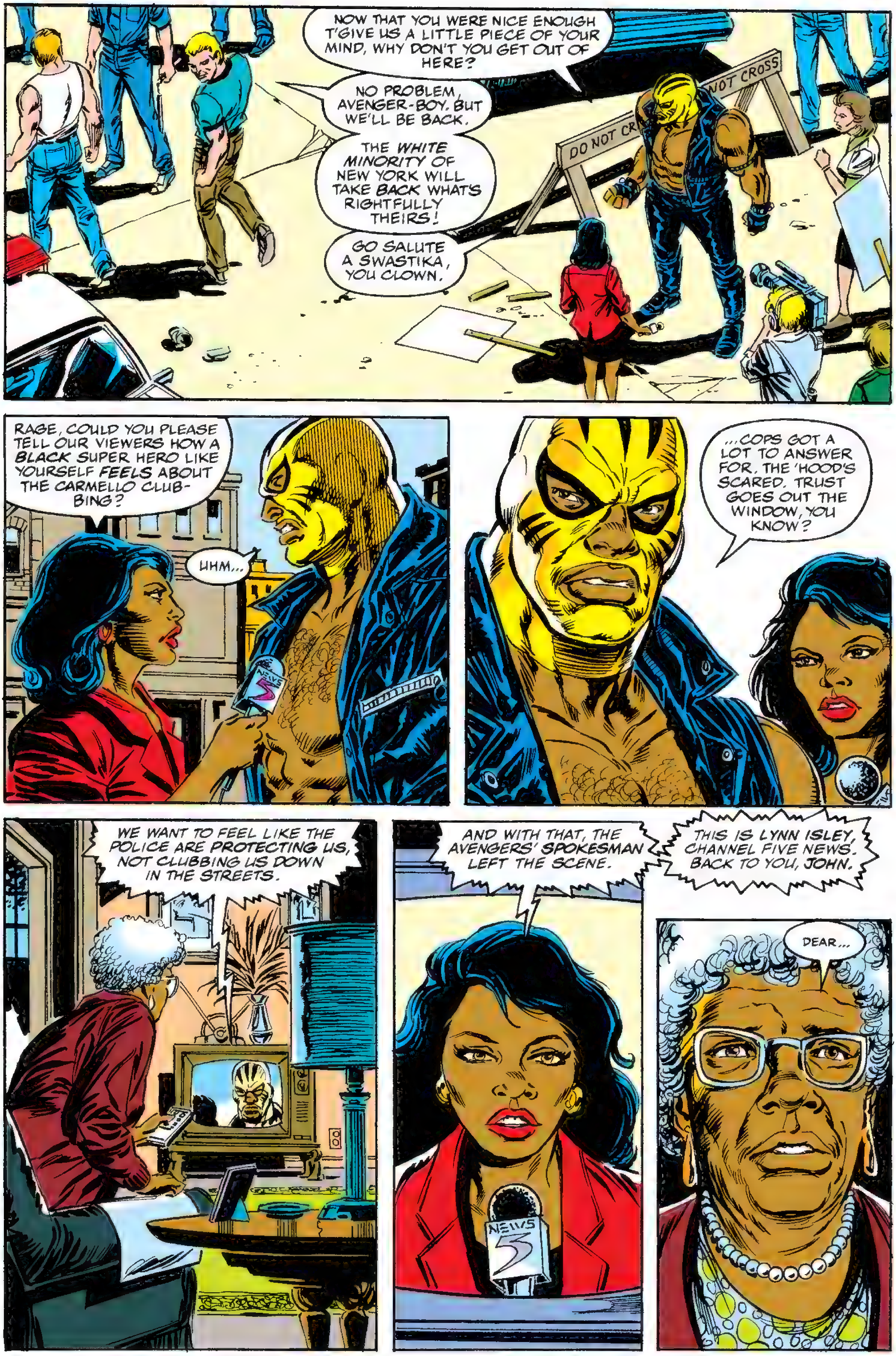
RAGE OF ANGELS

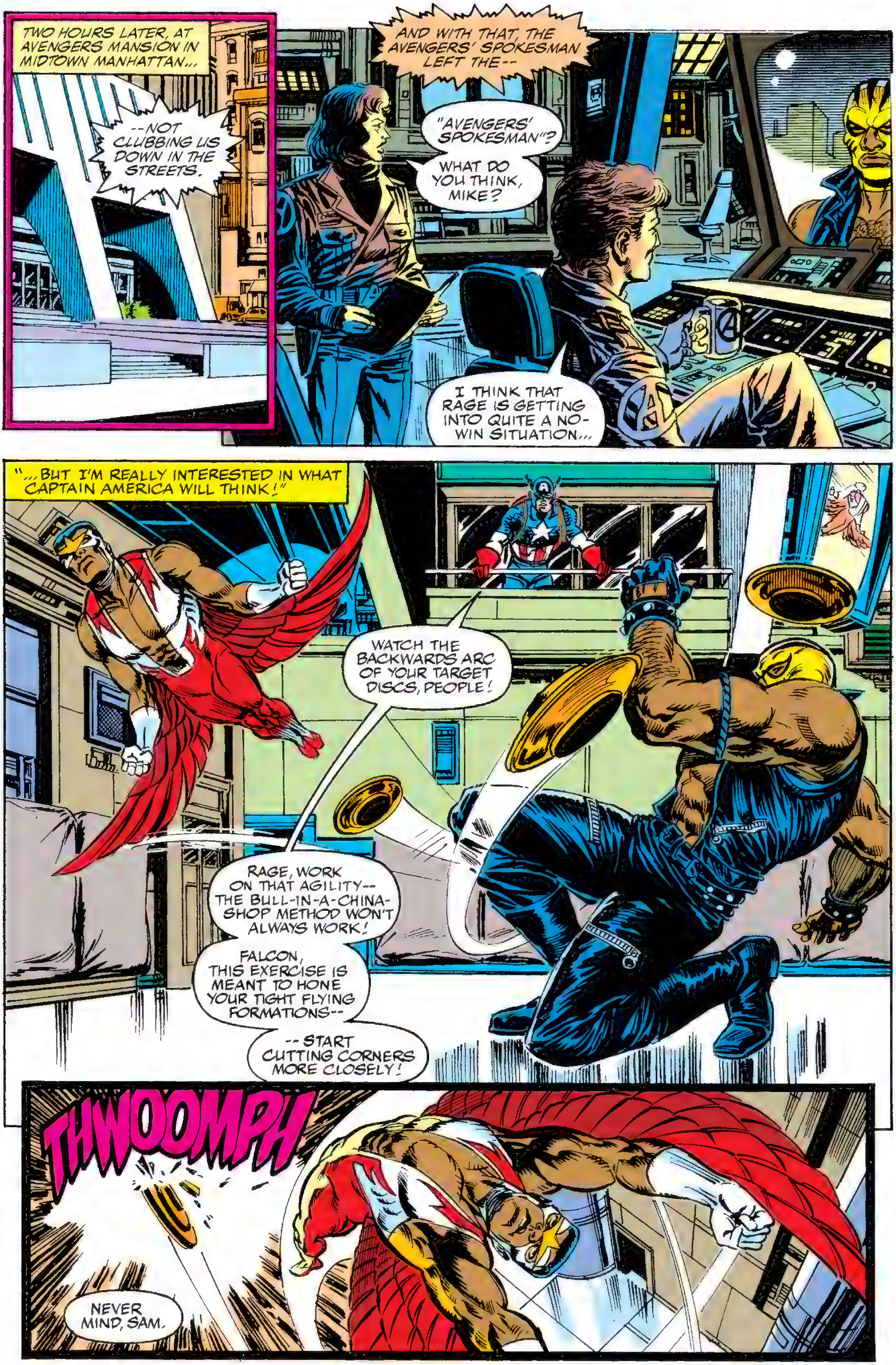

THOUGH HANDCUFFED, CARMELLO WAS HIT OFTEN ENOUGH SO THAT HE REMAINS IN CRITICAL CONDITION AT MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL.
PROTESTORS HAVE STOOD IN FRONT OF THE 41ST PRECINCT DECRYING THE ACTIONS OF THE POLICE OFFICERS SINCE THE INCIDENT OCCURRED.
NEW YORK CITY POLIC
CINCT
NEWS 5
THE VIDEOTAPE OF WHAT HAS BEEN DUBBED "THE CARMELLO CLUBBING" HAS BEEN BURNED INTO THE COLLECTIVE MIND OF NEW YORKERS--
--AND THEIR OPINIONS ON THE MATTER ARE AS INCENDIARY AS THE ACT ITSELF!
THE POLICE HAVE TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS!
WE'RE TIRED OF THIS KIND OF INDISCRIMINATE ATTACK!
NO POLICE STATE
MAYBE THE POLICE HAD A GOOD REASON? Y'KNOW? WHO'S TO SAY? KIDS TODAY... AND DRUGS...
UNPR

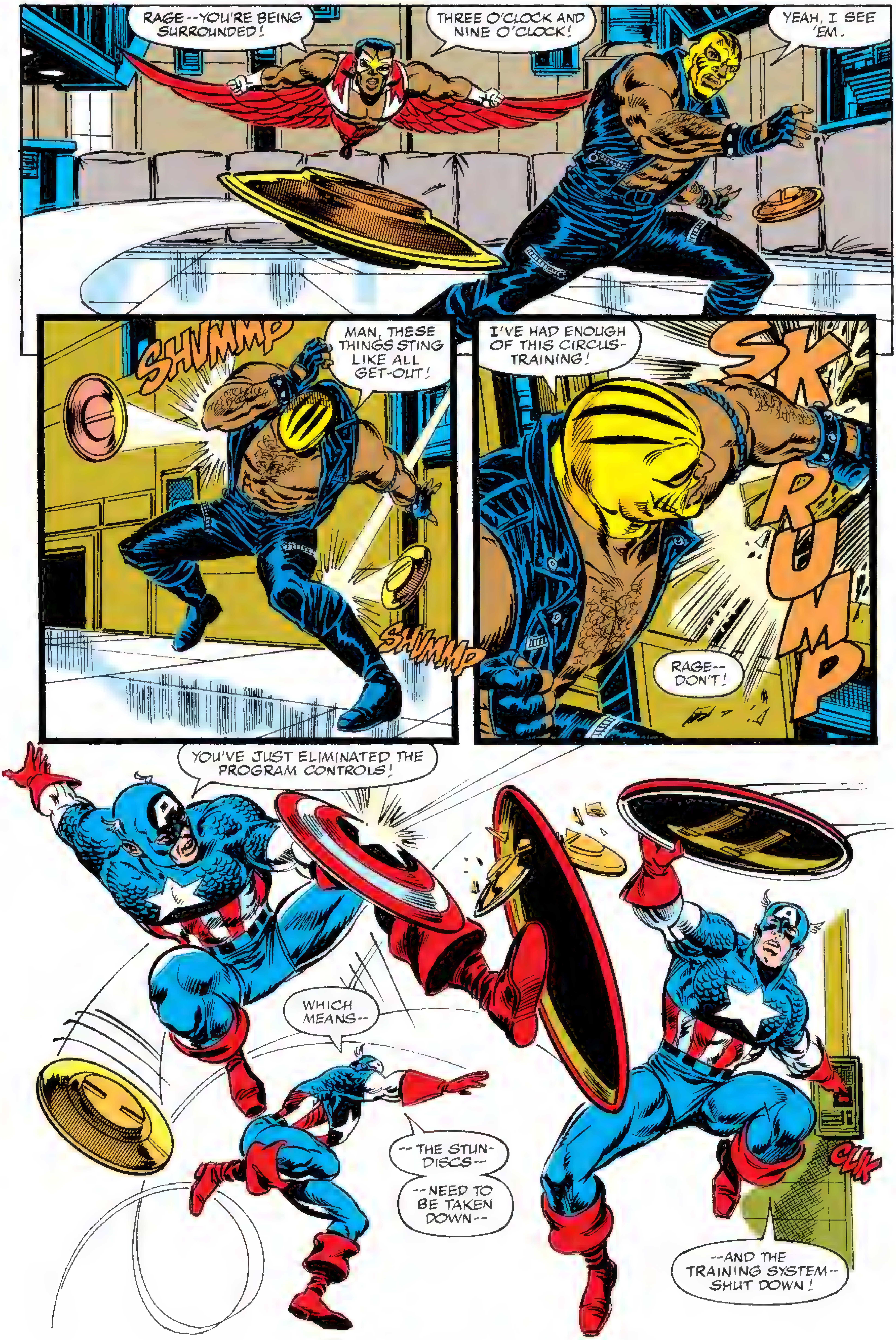
FABIAN NICIEZA GUEST WRITER
STEVEN EPTING PENCILER
TOM PALMER INKER
MICHAEL HEISLER LETTERER
CHRISTIE SCHEELE COLORIST
RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

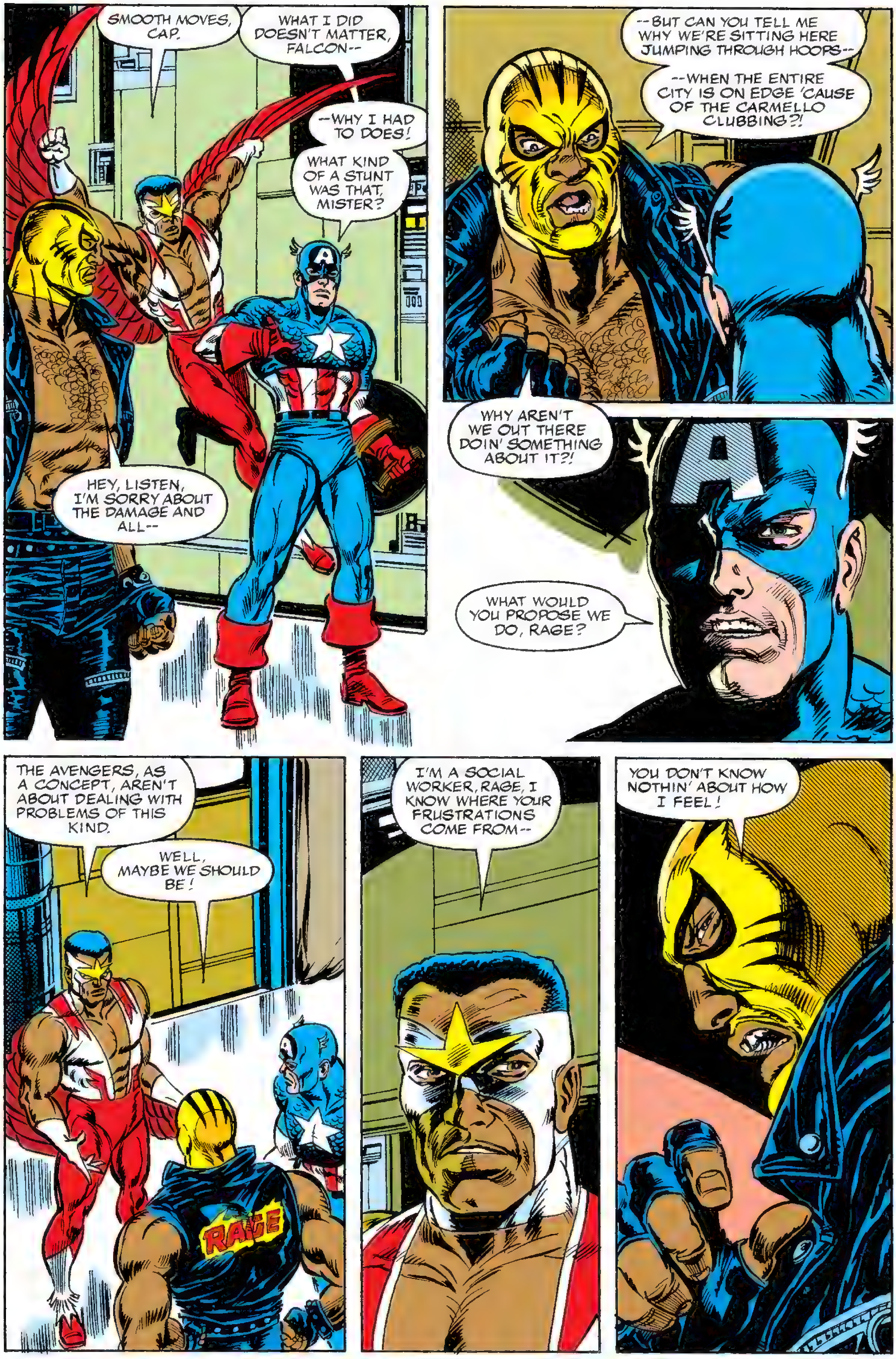

SIR--?
PUNKS LIKE THAT DESERVE WHAT THEY GET! ALL *THEM* TYPES DO!
DO NOT CRO
CITY'S BECOME A **SEWER** SINCE ALL **YOUR** TYPES SHOWED UP!
NEWS
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MAN?
SHUT THAT GUY UP!
ANY O' YOU LIBERAL, HIPPIE PIECES O' CRUD CARE T'GIVE IT A TRY?
OT CROS
NO POLICE STATE
THE AVENGER KNOWN AS **RAGE** HAS DRAMATICALLY INTRUDED UPON AN ALREADY TEMPESTUOUS SCENARIO!
HA
I DO!
KENNY-- TELL ME YOU'RE GETTING THIS--
I'M GETTING THIS.

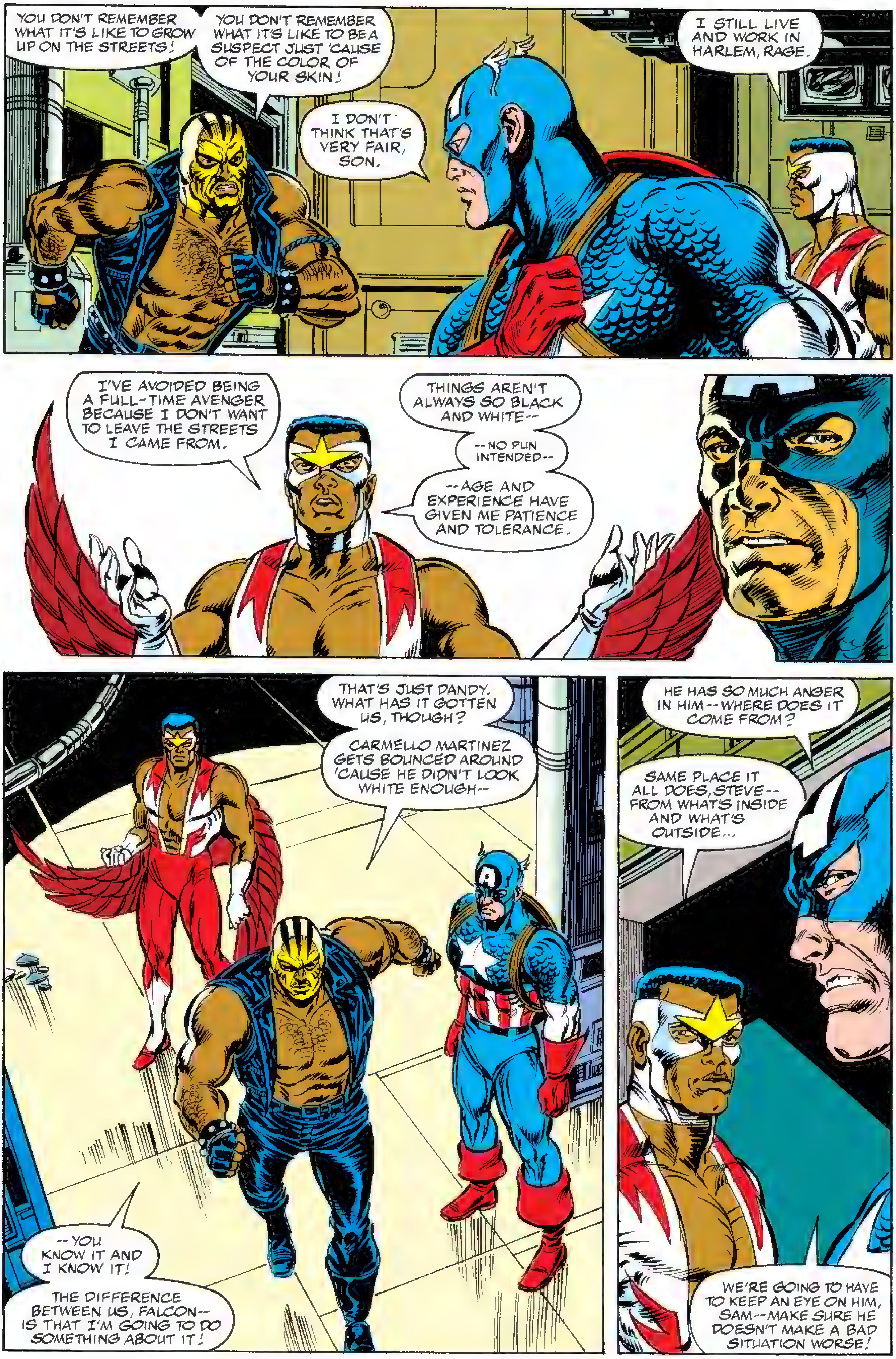

41st IS THE WORST
YOU WANT TO RUN THAT SPIEL BY ME AGAIN?
41st IS THE WORST
ME BEING UP ON THE ROOF AND ALL, MAYBE I DIDN'T HEAR YOU RIGHT...
COPS
CHOP SHOP COPS
IF YOU HEARD ME SAY THAT MAYBE THAT SPIC KID HAD IT COMIN', THEN YOU HEARD RIGHT.
YOU SURE THAT'S A SMART THING TO BE SAYING TO SOMEONE WHO LIVES THESE STREETS LIKE I DO?
NEWS 5
I GOT A RIGHT T' DISAGREE WITH ALL THESE CANDY-BUTT WHINERS.
IT'S IN THE CONSTITUTION.
AND JUST IN CASE ANYONE DISAGREES WITH YOUR "CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS"...
DRUGS
NEWS 5
...YOU BRING WEAPONS WITH YOU?
SNAP

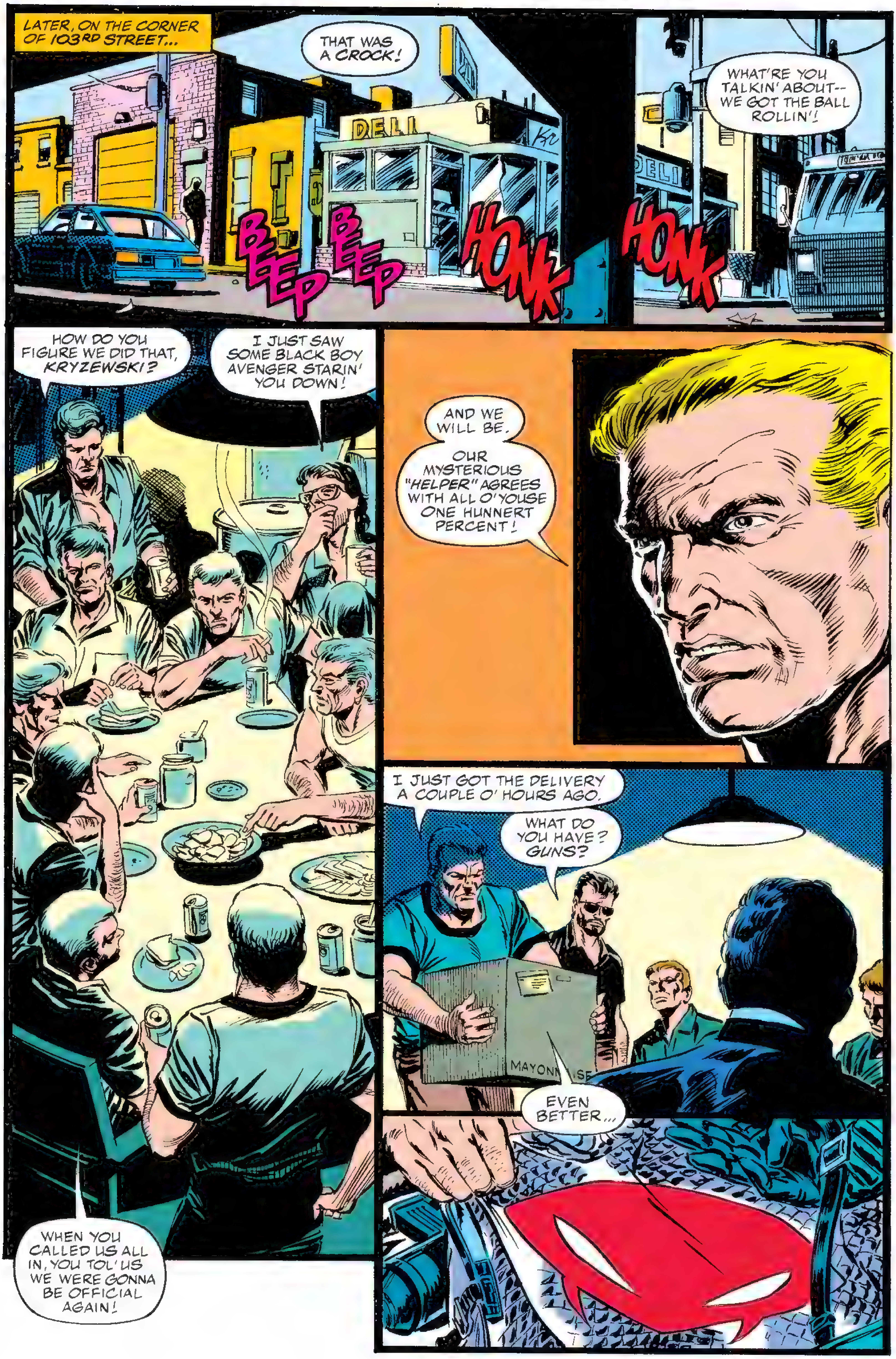

NOW THAT YOU WERE NICE ENOUGH T'GIVE US A LITTLE PIECE OF YOUR MIND, WHY DON'T YOU GET OUT OF HERE?
NO PROBLEM, AVENGER-BOY. BUT WE'LL BE BACK.
THE WHITE MINORITY OF NEW YORK WILL TAKE BACK WHAT'S RIGHTFULLY THEIRS!
GO SALUTE A SWASTIKA, YOU CLOWN.
DO NOT CR
NOT CROSS
RAGE, COULD YOU PLEASE TELL OUR VIEWERS HOW A BLACK SUPER HERO LIKE YOURSELF FEELS ABOUT THE CARMELLO CLUBBING?
UHM...
NEWS 5
...COPS GOT A LOT TO ANSWER FOR. THE 'HOOD'S SCARED. TRUST GOES OUT THE WINDOW, YOU KNOW?
WE WANT TO FEEL LIKE THE POLICE ARE PROTECTING US, NOT CLUBBING US DOWN IN THE STREETS.
AND WITH THAT, THE AVENGERS' SPOKESMAN LEFT THE SCENE.
THIS IS LYNN ISLEY, CHANNEL FIVE NEWS. BACK TO YOU, JOHN.
NEWS 5
DEAR...

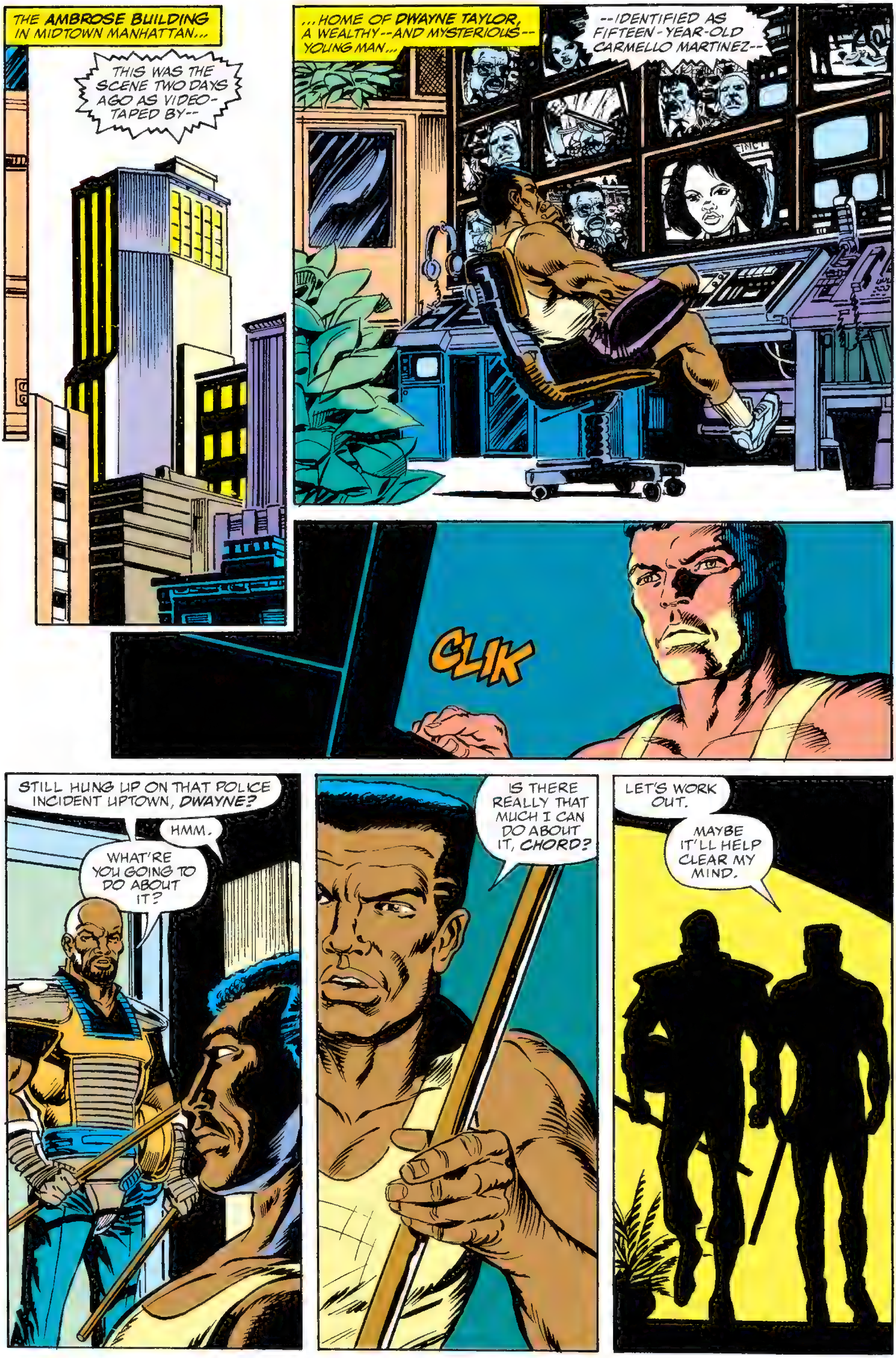

TWO HOURS LATER, AT AVENGERS MANSION IN MIDTOWN MANHATTAN...
--NOT CLUBBING US DOWN IN THE STREETS.
AND WITH THAT, THE AVENGERS' SPOKESMAN LEFT THE--
"AVENGERS' SPOKESMAN"?
WHAT DO YOU THINK, MIKE?
I THINK THAT RAGE IS GETTING INTO QUITE A NO-WIN SITUATION...
"...BUT I'M REALLY INTERESTED IN WHAT CAPTAIN AMERICA WILL THINK!"
WATCH THE BACKWARDS ARC OF YOUR TARGET DISCS, PEOPLE!
RAGE, WORK ON THAT AGILITY-- THE BULL-IN-A-CHINA-SHOP METHOD WON'T ALWAYS WORK!
FALCON, THIS EXERCISE IS MEANT TO HONE YOUR TIGHT FLYING FORMATIONS--
--START CUTTING CORNERS MORE CLOSELY!
THWOOMPH
NEVER MIND, SAM.

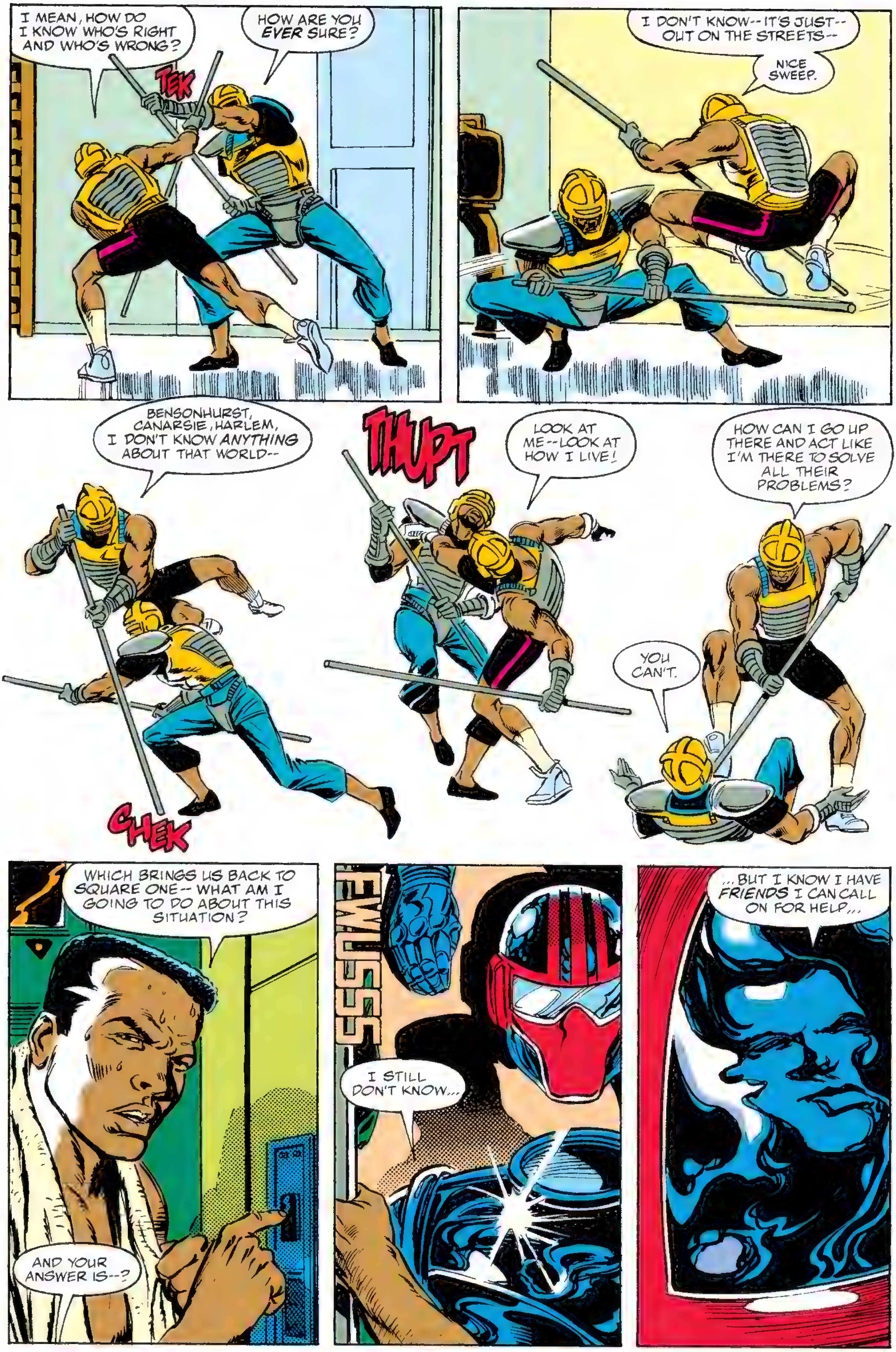

RAGE--YOU'RE BEING SURROUNDED!
THREE O'CLOCK AND NINE O'CLOCK!
YEAH, I SEE 'EM.
SHVMMP
MAN, THESE THINGS STING LIKE ALL GET-OUT!
SHVMMP
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS CIRCUS-TRAINING!
SKRUMP
RAGE--DON'T!
YOU'VE JUST ELIMINATED THE PROGRAM CONTROLS!
WHICH MEANS--
--THE STUN-DISCS--
--NEED TO BE TAKEN DOWN--
CLIK
--AND THE TRAINING SYSTEM--SHUT DOWN!

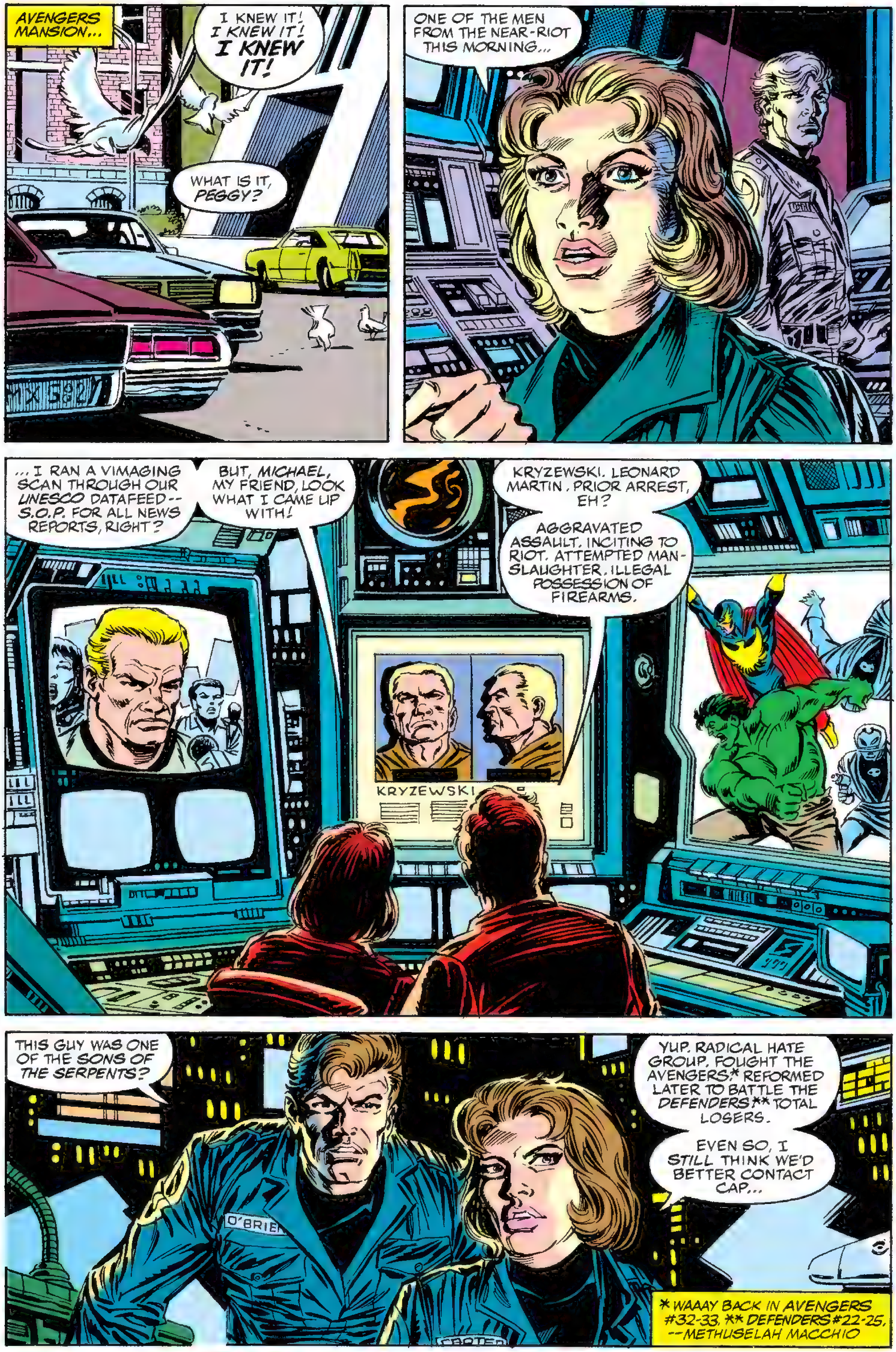

SMOOTH MOVES, CAP.
WHAT I DID DOESN'T MATTER, FALCON--
--WHY I HAD TO DOES!
WHAT KIND OF A STUNT WAS THAT, MISTER?
HEY, LISTEN, I'M SORRY ABOUT THE DAMAGE AND ALL--
--BUT CAN YOU TELL ME WHY WE'RE SITTING HERE JUMPING THROUGH HOOPS--
--WHEN THE ENTIRE CITY IS ON EDGE 'CAUSE OF THE CARMELLO CLUBBING?!
WHY AREN'T WE OUT THERE DOIN' SOMETHING ABOUT IT?!
WHAT WOULD YOU PROPOSE WE DO, RAGE?
THE AVENGERS, AS A CONCEPT, AREN'T ABOUT DEALING WITH PROBLEMS OF THIS KIND.
WELL, MAYBE WE SHOULD BE!
RAGE
I'M A SOCIAL WORKER, RAGE, I KNOW WHERE YOUR FRUSTRATIONS COME FROM--
YOU DON'T KNOW NOTHIN' ABOUT HOW I FEEL!

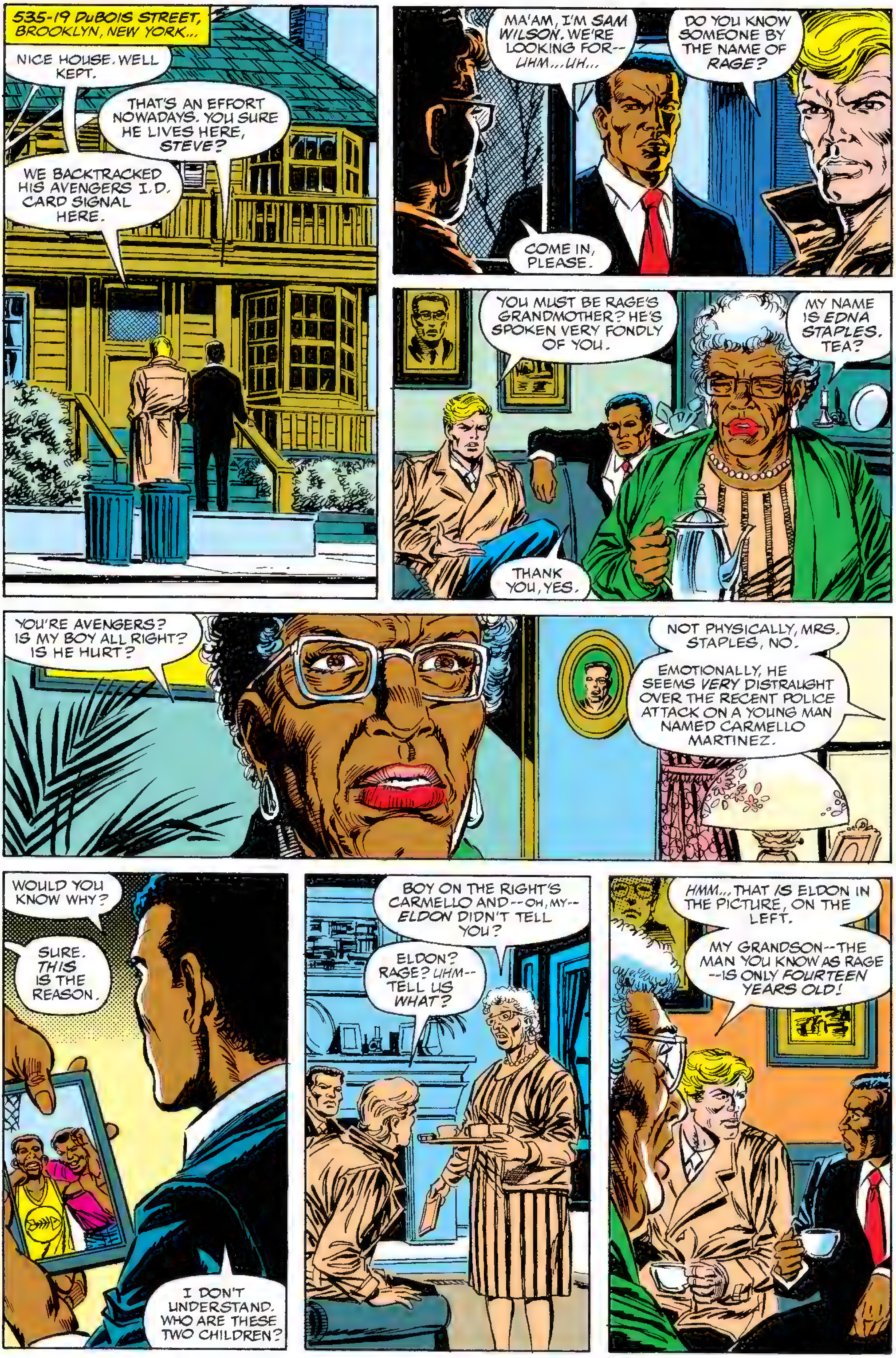

YOU DON'T REMEMBER WHAT IT'S LIKE TO GROW UP ON THE STREETS!
YOU DON'T REMEMBER WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A SUSPECT JUST 'CAUSE OF THE COLOR OF YOUR SKIN!
I DON'T THINK THAT'S VERY FAIR, SON.
I STILL LIVE AND WORK IN HARLEM, RAGE.
I'VE AVOIDED BEING A FULL-TIME AVENGER BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THE STREETS I CAME FROM.
THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS SO BLACK AND WHITE--
--NO PUN INTENDED--
--AGE AND EXPERIENCE HAVE GIVEN ME PATIENCE AND TOLERANCE.
THAT'S JUST DANDY. WHAT HAS IT GOTTEN US, THOUGH?
CARMELLO MARTINEZ GETS BOUNCED AROUND 'CAUSE HE DIDN'T LOOK WHITE ENOUGH--
--YOU KNOW IT AND I KNOW IT!
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US, FALCON-- IS THAT I'M GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!
HE HAS SO MUCH ANGER IN HIM--WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?
SAME PLACE IT ALL DOES, STEVE-- FROM WHAT'S INSIDE AND WHAT'S OUTSIDE...
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO KEEP AN EYE ON HIM, SAM--MAKE SURE HE DOESN'T MAKE A BAD SITUATION WORSE!

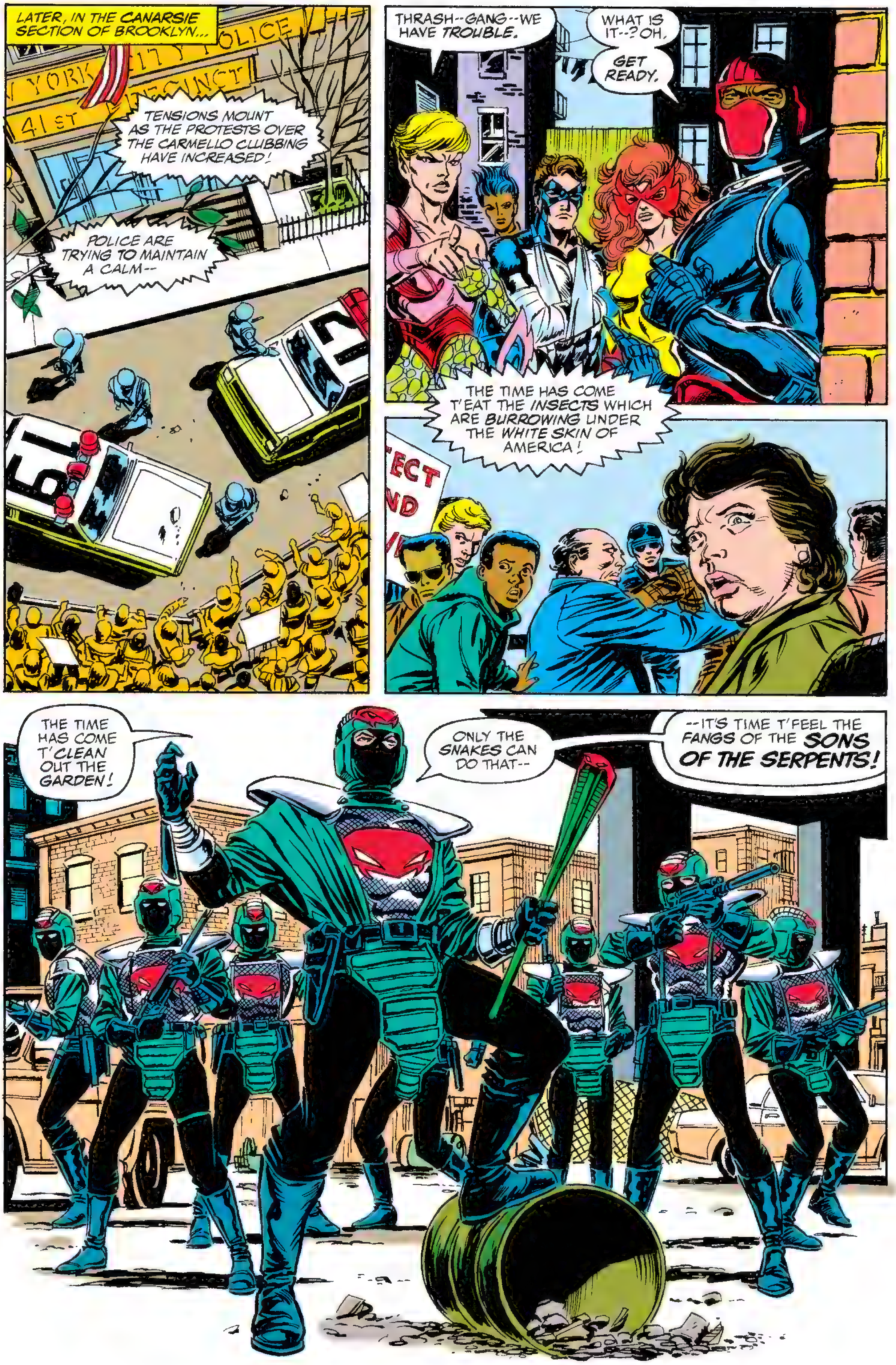

LATER, ON THE CORNER OF 103RD STREET...
DELI
THAT WAS A CROCK!
BEEP BEEP
HONK HONK
WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT-- WE GOT THE BALL ROLLIN'!
DELI
HOW DO YOU FIGURE WE DID THAT, KRYZEWSKI?
I JUST SAW SOME BLACK BOY AVENGER STARIN' YOU DOWN!
WHEN YOU CALLED US ALL IN, YOU TOL' US WE WERE GONNA BE OFFICIAL AGAIN!
AND WE WILL BE.
OUR MYSTERIOUS "HELPER" AGREES WITH ALL O'YOUSE ONE HUNNERT PERCENT!
I JUST GOT THE DELIVERY A COUPLE O' HOURS AGO.
WHAT DO YOU HAVE? GUNS?
MAYONNAISE
EVEN BETTER...

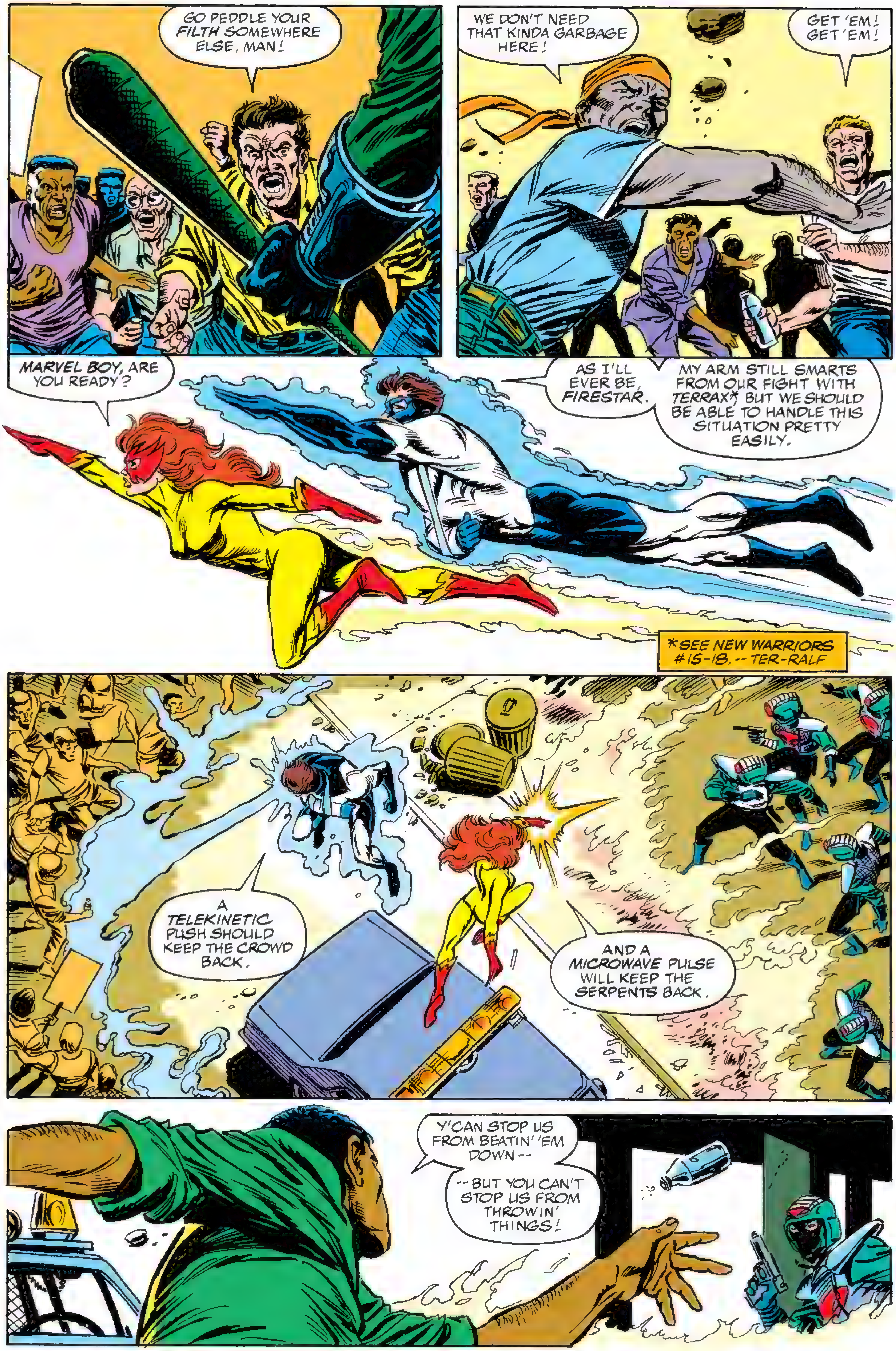

THE AMBROSE BUILDING IN MIDTOWN MANHATTAN...
THIS WAS THE SCENE TWO DAYS AGO AS VIDEO-TAPED BY--
...HOME OF DWAYNE TAYLOR, A WEALTHY--AND MYSTERIOUS--YOUNG MAN...
--IDENTIFIED AS FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD CARMELLO MARTINEZ--
CLIK
STILL HUNG UP ON THAT POLICE INCIDENT UPTOWN, DWAYNE?
HMM.
WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?
IS THERE REALLY THAT MUCH I CAN DO ABOUT IT, CHORD?
LET'S WORK OUT.
MAYBE IT'LL HELP CLEAR MY MIND.

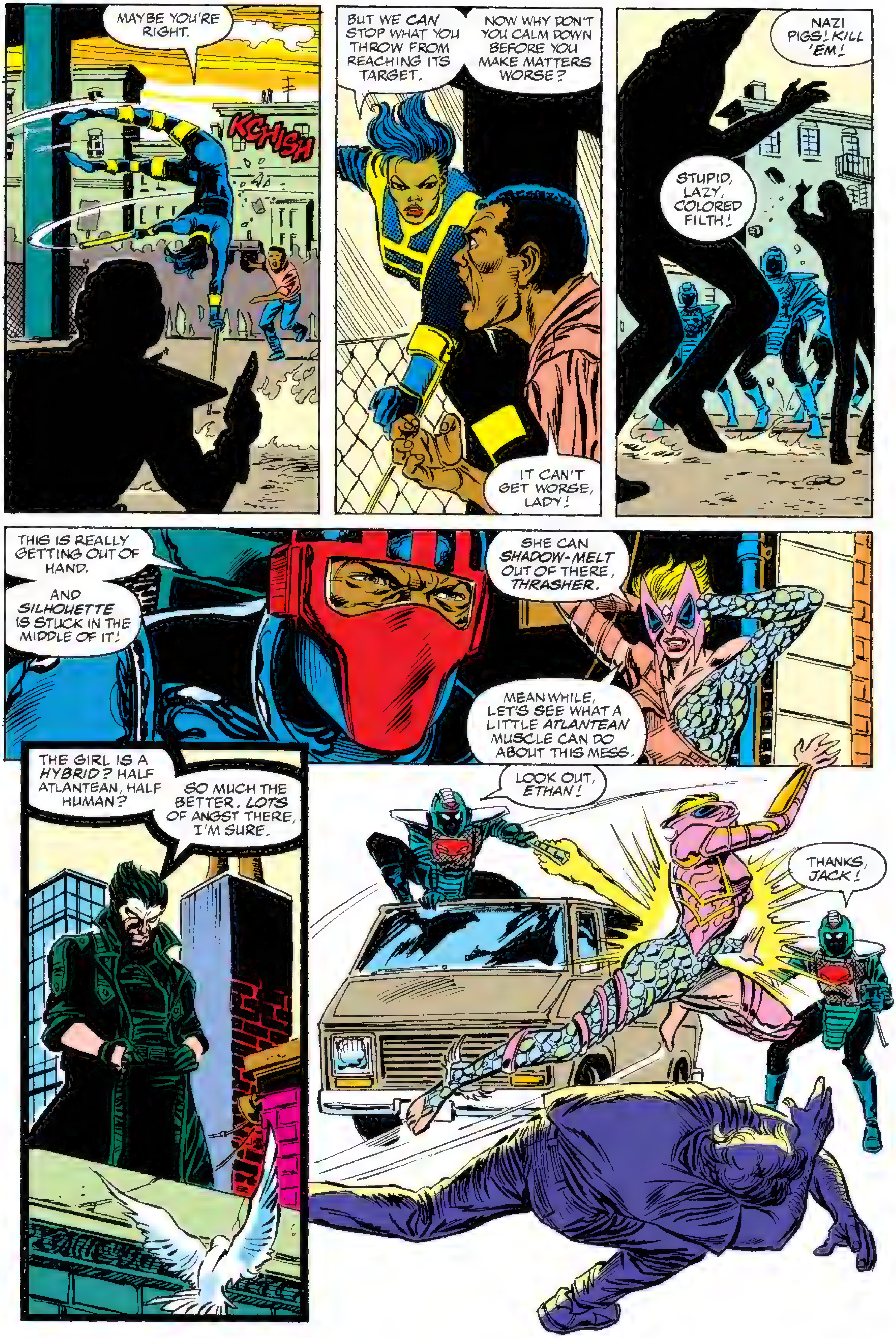

I MEAN, HOW DO I KNOW WHO'S RIGHT AND WHO'S WRONG?
HOW ARE YOU *EVER* SURE?
TEK
I DON'T KNOW-- IT'S JUST-- OUT ON THE STREETS--
NICE SWEEP.
BENSONHURST, CANARSIE, HARLEM, I DON'T KNOW *ANYTHING* ABOUT THAT WORLD--
CHEK
THUPT
LOOK AT ME--LOOK AT HOW I LIVE!
HOW CAN I GO UP THERE AND ACT LIKE I'M THERE TO SOLVE ALL THEIR PROBLEMS?
YOU CAN'T.
WHICH BRINGS US BACK TO SQUARE ONE-- WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS SITUATION?
AND YOUR ANSWER IS--?
EWUSSSS
I STILL DON'T KNOW...
...BUT I KNOW I HAVE *FRIENDS* I CAN CALL ON FOR HELP...

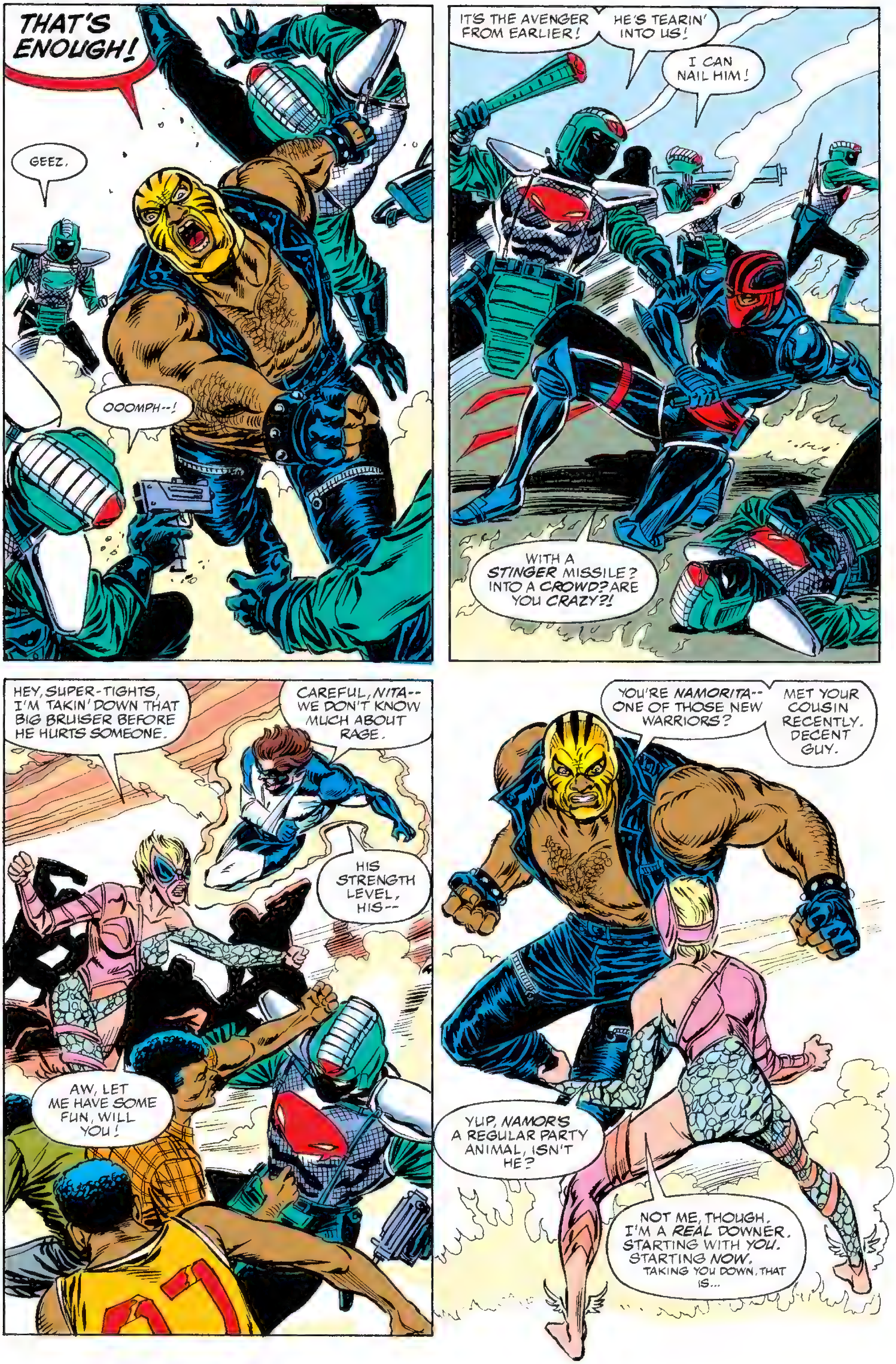

AVENGERS MANSION...
I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT!
WHAT IS IT, PEGGY?
ONE OF THE MEN FROM THE NEAR-RIOT THIS MORNING...
...I RAN A VIMAGING SCAN THROUGH OUR UNESCO DATAFEED--S.O.P. FOR ALL NEWS REPORTS, RIGHT?
BUT, MICHAEL, MY FRIEND, LOOK WHAT I CAME UP WITH!
KRYZEWSKI, LEONARD MARTIN. PRIOR ARREST, EH?
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT, INCITING TO RIOT, ATTEMPTED MANSLAUGHTER, ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARMS.
KRYZEWSKI
THIS GUY WAS ONE OF THE SONS OF THE SERPENTS?
YUP. RADICAL HATE GROUP. FOUGHT THE AVENGERS,* REFORMED LATER TO BATTLE THE DEFENDERS.** TOTAL LOSERS.
EVEN SO, I STILL THINK WE'D BETTER CONTACT CAP...
O'BRIEN
CARTER
* WAAAY BACK IN AVENGERS #32-33. ** DEFENDERS #22-25. --METHUSELAH MACCHIO

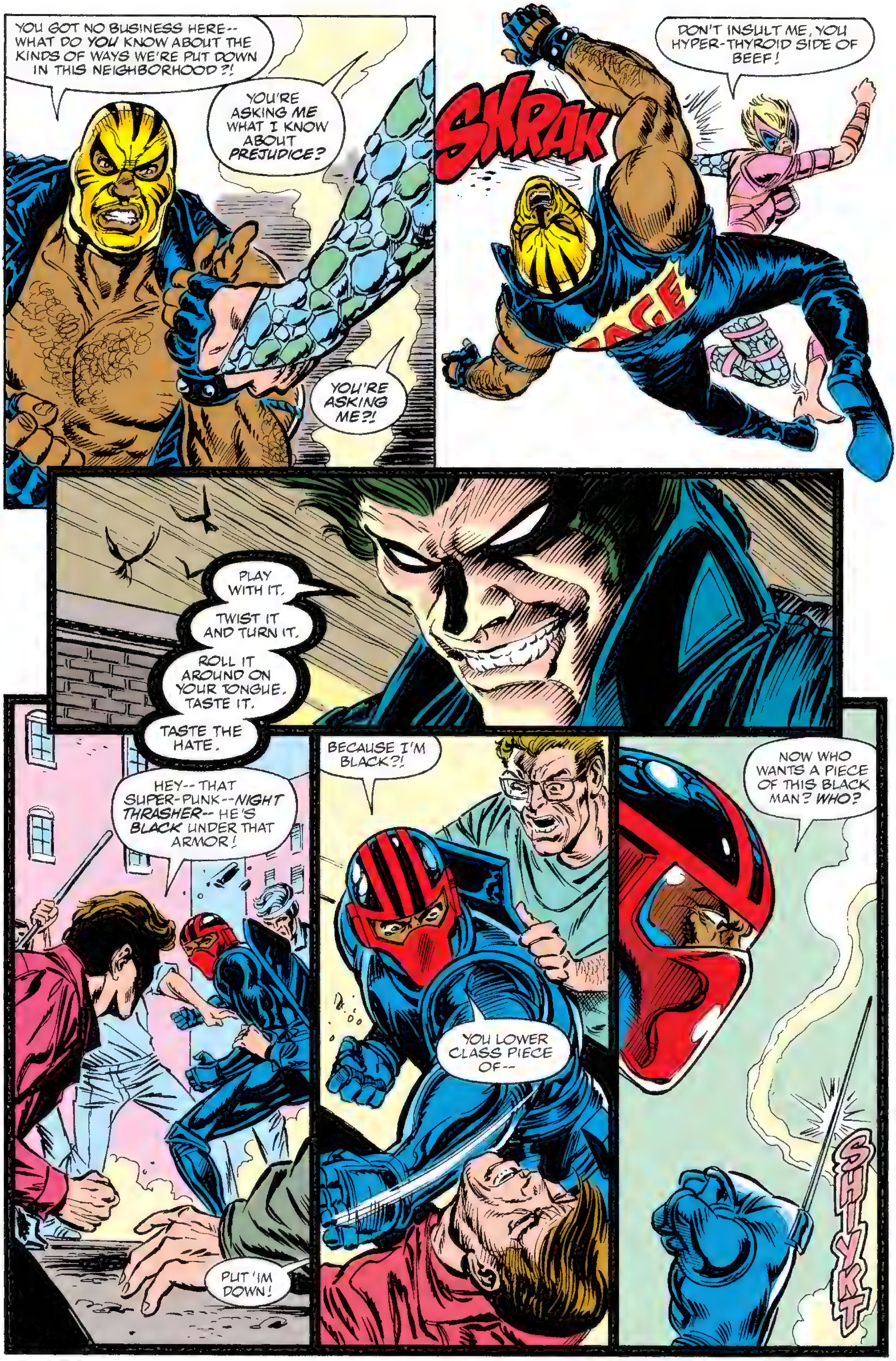

535-19 DuBOIS STREET, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK...
NICE HOUSE. WELL KEPT.
THAT'S AN EFFORT NOWADAYS. YOU SURE HE LIVES HERE, *STEVE*?
WE BACKTRACKED HIS AVENGERS I.D. CARD SIGNAL HERE.
MA'AM, I'M *SAM WILSON*. WE'RE LOOKING FOR-- *UHM... UH...*
DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE BY THE NAME OF *RAGE*?
COME IN, PLEASE.
YOU MUST BE RAGE'S GRANDMOTHER? HE'S SPOKEN VERY FONDLY OF YOU.
MY NAME IS *EDNA STAPLES*. TEA?
THANK YOU, YES.
YOU'RE AVENGERS? IS MY BOY ALL RIGHT? IS HE HURT?
NOT PHYSICALLY, MRS. STAPLES, NO.
EMOTIONALLY, HE SEEMS *VERY* DISTRAUGHT OVER THE RECENT POLICE ATTACK ON A YOUNG MAN NAMED CARMELLO MARTINEZ.
WOULD YOU KNOW WHY?
SURE. *THIS* IS THE REASON.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHO ARE THESE TWO CHILDREN?
BOY ON THE RIGHT'S CARMELLO AND-- OH, MY-- *ELDON* DIDN'T TELL YOU?
ELDON? RAGE? *UHM*-- TELL US *WHAT*?
HMM... THAT *IS* ELDON IN THE PICTURE, ON THE LEFT.
MY GRANDSON--THE MAN YOU KNOW AS RAGE --IS ONLY *FOURTEEN YEARS OLD!*

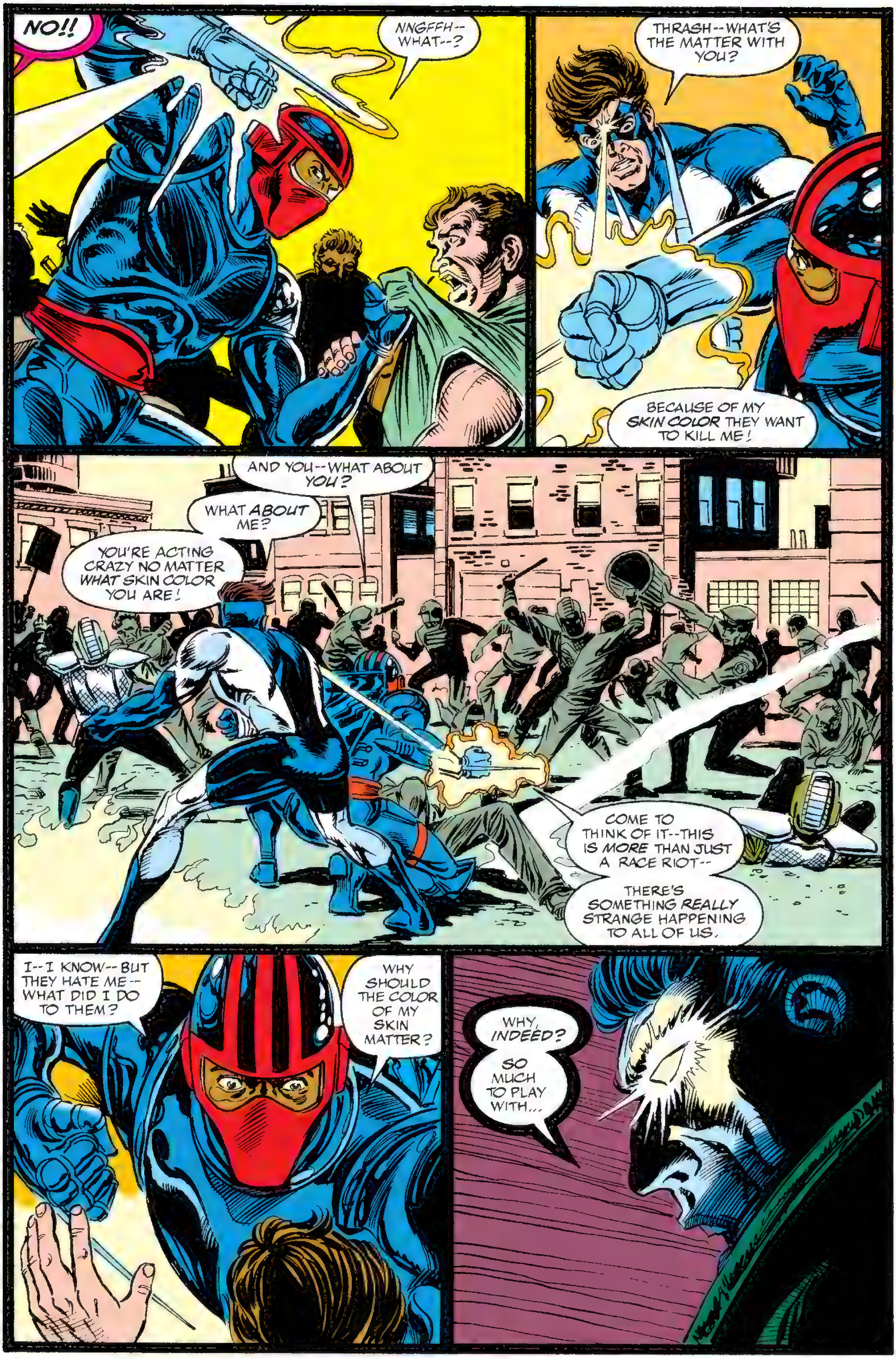

LATER, IN THE CANARSIE SECTION OF BROOKLYN...
N YORK CITY POLICE
41ST PRECINCT
TENSIONS MOUNT AS THE PROTESTS OVER THE CARMELLO CLUBBING HAVE INCREASED!
POLICE ARE TRYING TO MAINTAIN A CALM--
THRASH--GANG--WE HAVE TROUBLE.
WHAT IS IT--? OH.
GET READY.
THE TIME HAS COME T'EAT THE INSECTS WHICH ARE BURROWING UNDER THE WHITE SKIN OF AMERICA!
ECT
ND
THE TIME HAS COME T'CLEAN OUT THE GARDEN!
ONLY THE SNAKES CAN DO THAT--
--IT'S TIME T'FEEL THE FANGS OF THE SONS OF THE SERPENTS!

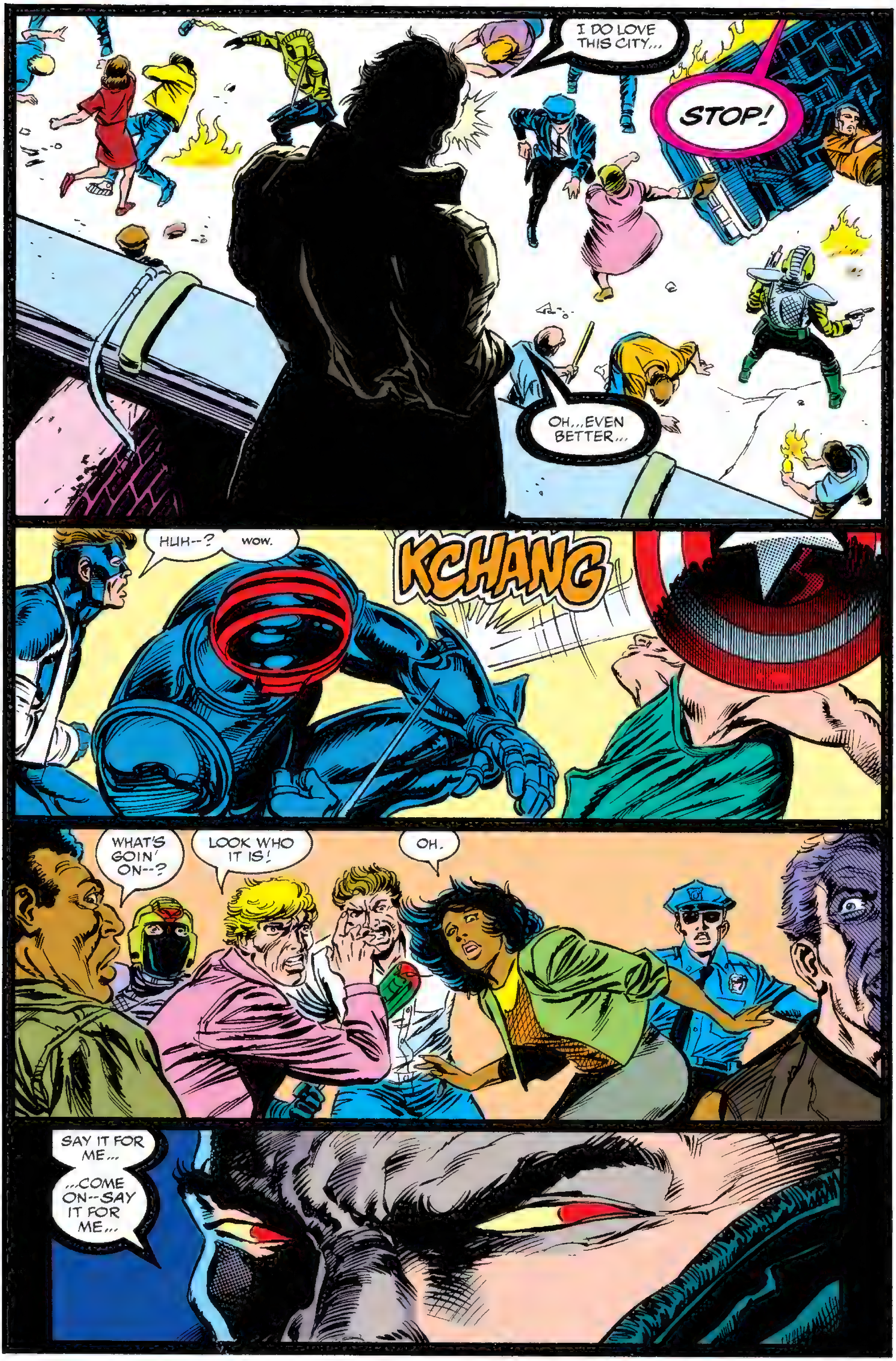

GO PEDDLE YOUR *FILTH* SOMEWHERE ELSE, MAN!
WE DON'T NEED THAT KINDA GARBAGE HERE!
GET 'EM! GET 'EM!
MARVEL BOY, ARE YOU READY?
AS I'LL EVER BE, *FIRESTAR*.
MY ARM STILL SMARTS FROM OUR FIGHT WITH *TERRAX*.* BUT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE THIS SITUATION PRETTY EASILY.
*SEE NEW WARRIORS #15-18. --TER-RALF
A *TELEKINETIC* PUSH SHOULD KEEP THE CROWD BACK.
AND A *MICROWAVE* PULSE WILL KEEP THE SERPENTS BACK.
Y'CAN STOP US FROM BEATIN' 'EM DOWN --
-- BUT YOU CAN'T STOP US FROM THROWIN' THINGS!

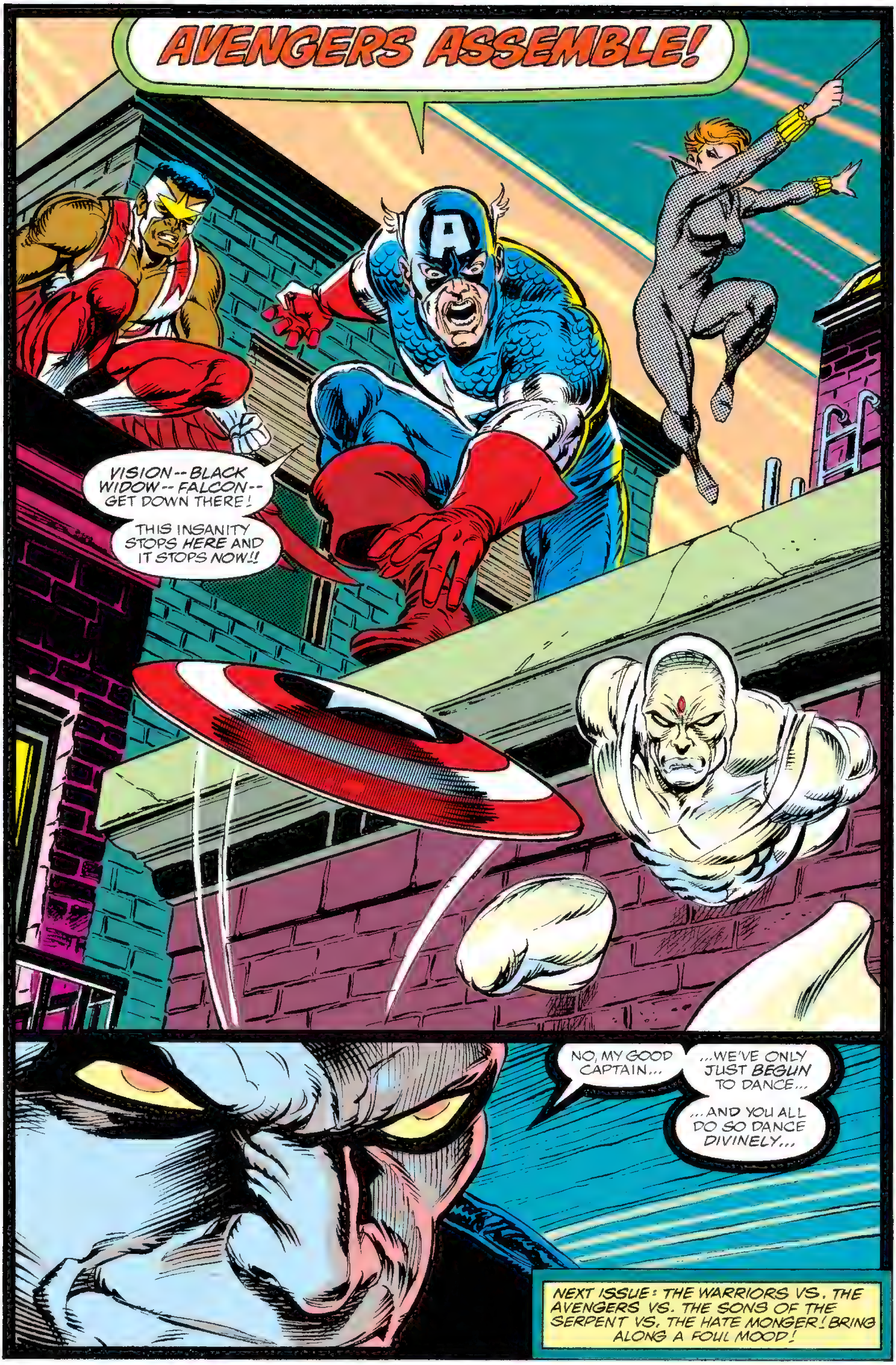

MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT.
KCHISH
BUT WE *CAN* STOP WHAT YOU THROW FROM REACHING ITS TARGET.
NOW WHY DON'T YOU CALM DOWN BEFORE YOU MAKE MATTERS WORSE?
IT CAN'T GET WORSE, LADY!
NAZI PIGS! *KILL 'EM!*
STUPID, LAZY, COLORED FILTH!
THIS IS REALLY GETTING OUT OF HAND.
AND *SILHOUETTE* IS STUCK IN THE MIDDLE OF IT!
SHE CAN *SHADOW-MELT* OUT OF THERE, *THRASHER.*
MEANWHILE, LET'S SEE WHAT A LITTLE *ATLANTEAN* MUSCLE CAN DO ABOUT THIS MESS.
THE GIRL IS A *HYBRID?* HALF ATLANTEAN, HALF HUMAN?
SO MUCH THE BETTER. *LOTS* OF ANGST THERE, I'M SURE.
LOOK OUT, *ETHAN!*
THANKS, *JACK!*


THAT'S ENOUGH!
GEEZ.
OOOMPH--!
IT'S THE AVENGER FROM EARLIER!
HE'S TEARIN' INTO US!
I CAN NAIL HIM!
WITH A *STINGER* MISSILE? INTO A *CROWD?* ARE YOU *CRAZY?!*
HEY, SUPER-TIGHTS, I'M TAKIN' DOWN THAT BIG BRUISER BEFORE HE HURTS SOMEONE.
CAREFUL, *NITA*-- WE DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT RAGE.
HIS STRENGTH LEVEL, HIS--
AW, LET ME HAVE SOME FUN, WILL YOU!
YOU'RE *NAMORITA*-- ONE OF THOSE NEW WARRIORS?
MET YOUR COUSIN RECENTLY. DECENT GUY.
YUP, *NAMOR'S* A REGULAR PARTY ANIMAL, ISN'T HE?
NOT ME, THOUGH. I'M A *REAL* DOWNER. STARTING WITH *YOU.* STARTING *NOW.* TAKING YOU DOWN, THAT IS...


YOU GOT NO BUSINESS HERE-- WHAT DO *YOU* KNOW ABOUT THE KINDS OF WAYS WE'RE PUT DOWN IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD?!
YOU'RE ASKING *ME* WHAT I KNOW ABOUT *PREJUDICE?*
YOU'RE ASKING ME?!
SKRAK
DON'T INSULT ME, YOU HYPER-THYROID SIDE OF BEEF!
PLAY WITH IT.
TWIST IT AND TURN IT.
ROLL IT AROUND ON YOUR TONGUE. TASTE IT.
TASTE THE HATE.
HEY-- THAT SUPER-PUNK--*NIGHT THRASHER*-- HE'S *BLACK* UNDER THAT ARMOR!
PUT 'IM DOWN!
BECAUSE I'M BLACK?!
YOU LOWER CLASS PIECE OF--
NOW WHO WANTS A PIECE OF THIS BLACK MAN? *WHO?*
SHIKT


NO!!
NNGFFH--WHAT--?
THRASH--WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?
BECAUSE OF MY *SKIN COLOR* THEY WANT TO KILL ME!
AND YOU--WHAT ABOUT *YOU*?
WHAT *ABOUT* ME?
YOU'RE ACTING CRAZY NO MATTER WHAT SKIN COLOR YOU ARE!
COME TO THINK OF IT--THIS IS *MORE* THAN JUST A RACE RIOT--
THERE'S SOMETHING *REALLY* STRANGE HAPPENING TO ALL OF US.
I--I KNOW--BUT THEY HATE ME--WHAT DID I DO TO THEM?
WHY SHOULD THE COLOR OF MY SKIN MATTER?
WHY, *INDEED*?
SO MUCH TO PLAY WITH...

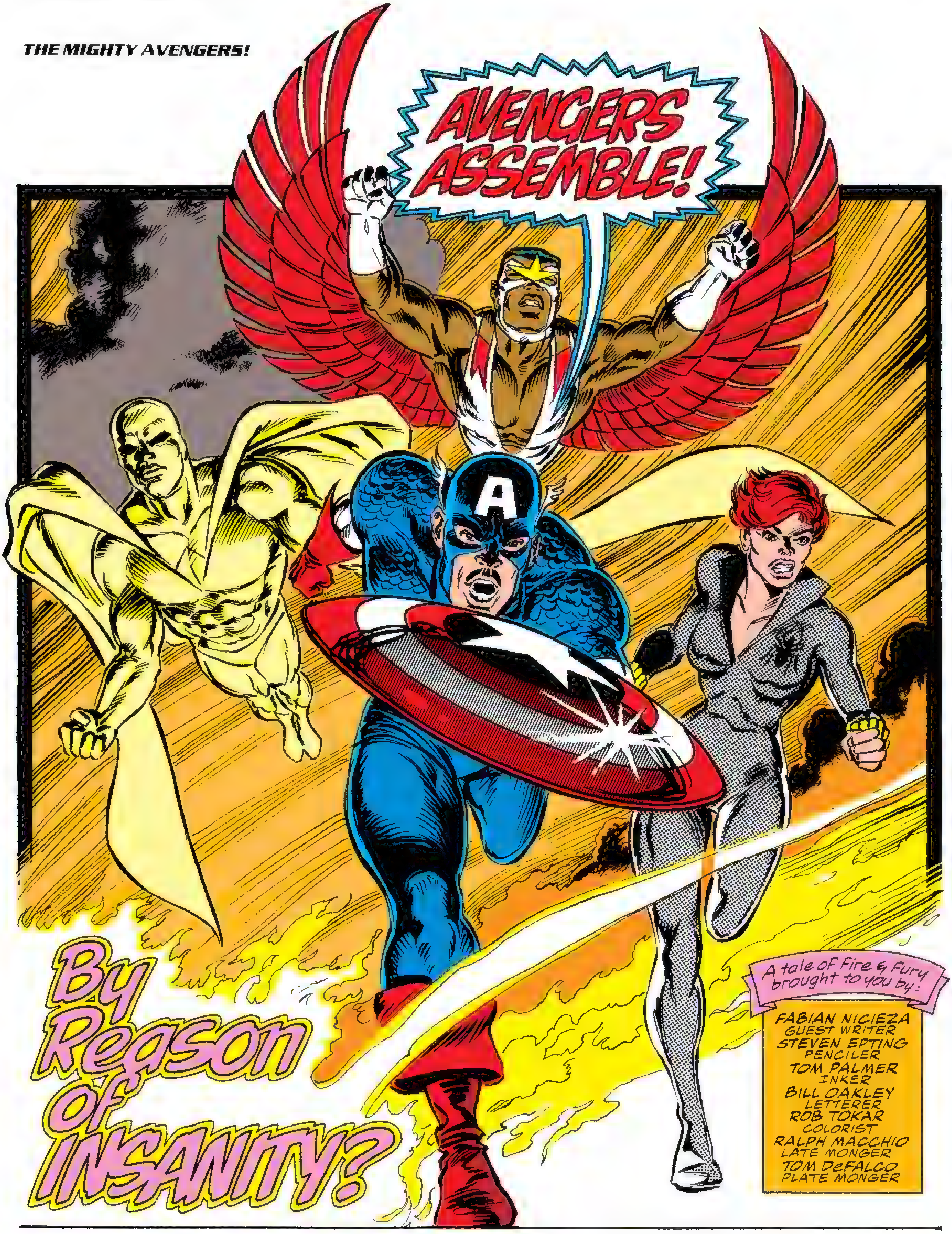

I DO LOVE THIS CITY...
STOP!
OH...EVEN BETTER...
HUH--?
WOW.
KCHANG
WHAT'S GOIN' ON--?
LOOK WHO IT IS!
OH.
SAY IT FOR ME...
...COME ON--SAY IT FOR ME...

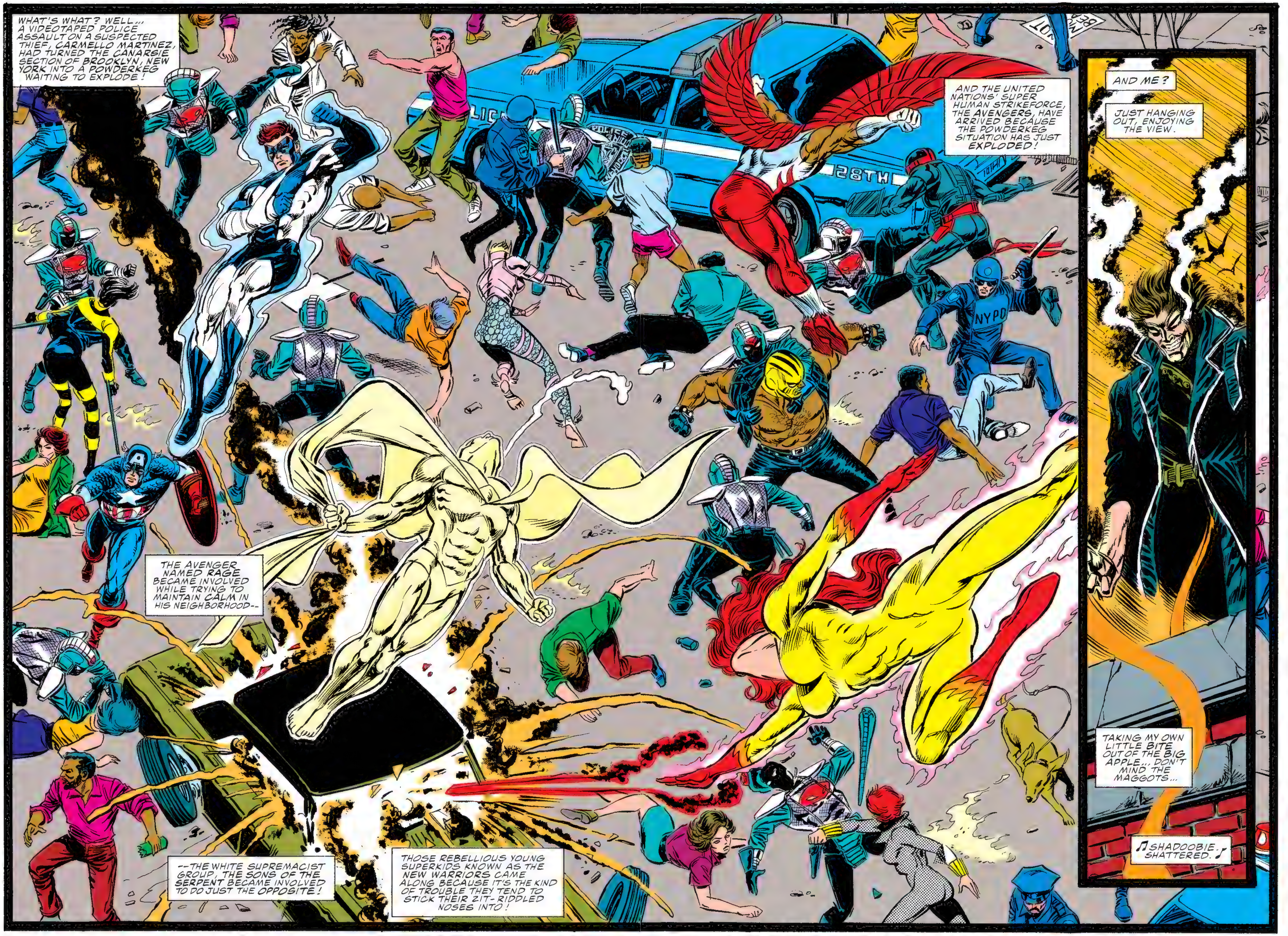

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
VISION--BLACK WIDOW--FALCON--GET DOWN THERE!
THIS INSANITY STOPS HERE AND IT STOPS NOW!!
NO, MY GOOD CAPTAIN...
...WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN TO DANCE...
...AND YOU ALL DO SO DANCE DIVINELY...
NEXT ISSUE: THE WARRIORS VS. THE AVENGERS VS. THE SONS OF THE SERPENT VS. THE HATE MONGER! BRING ALONG A FOUL MOOD!

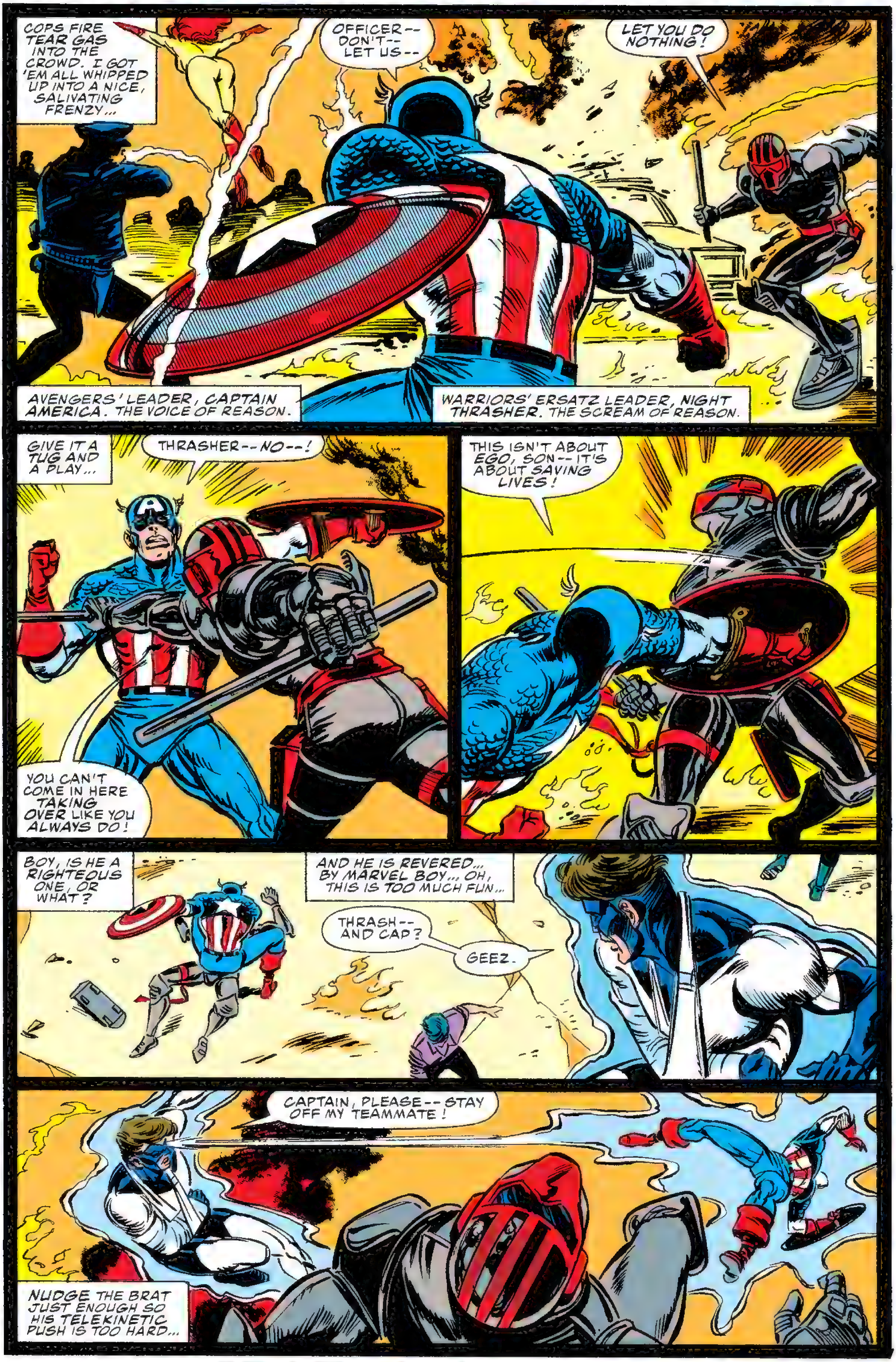
MARVEL COMICS
AVENGERS®
© 1991 MARVEL ENT. GROUP, INC.
TM
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN/UK 65p
342
DEC
CC 02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
HATE HATE HATE HATE HATE

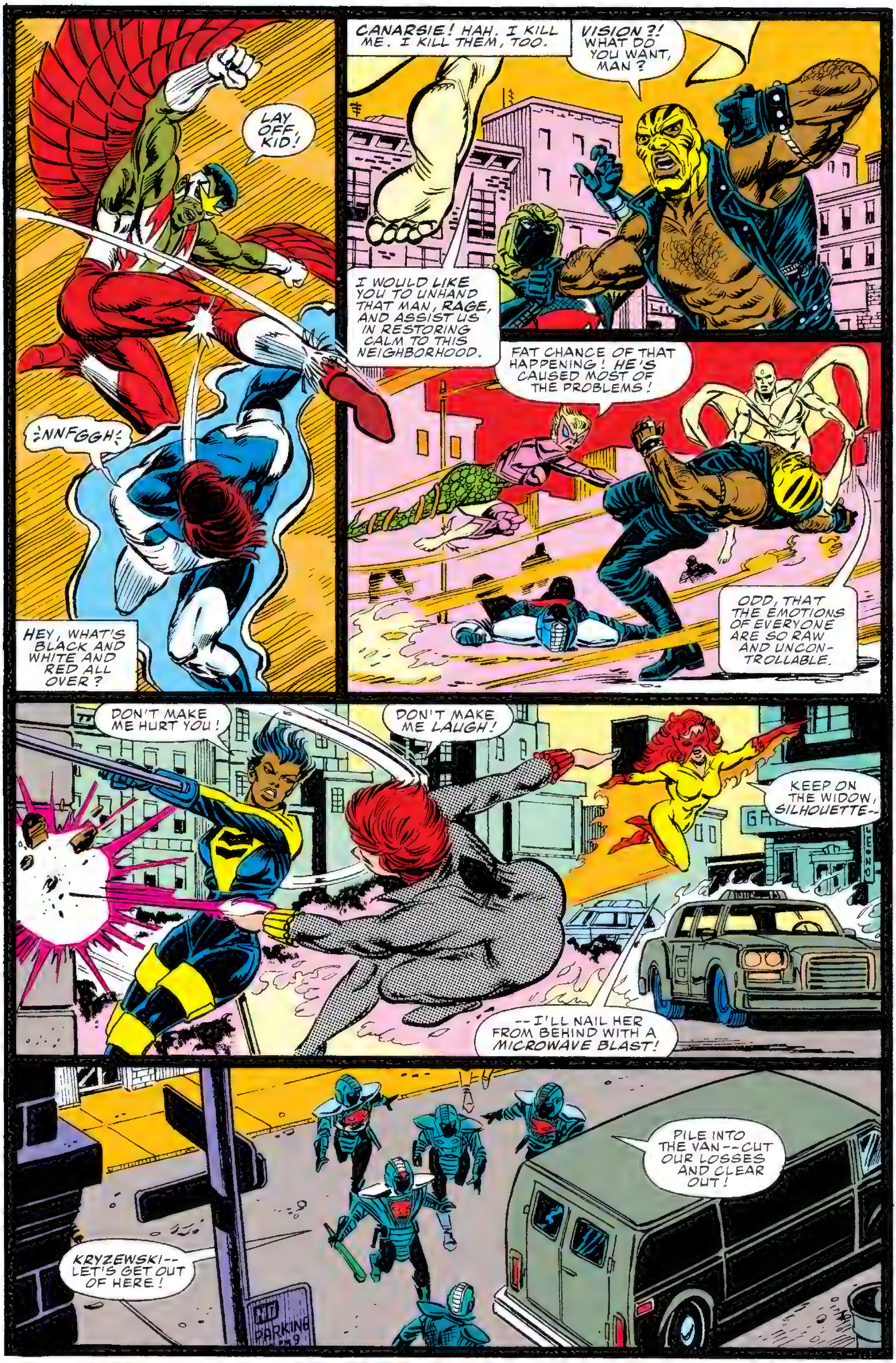
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . .

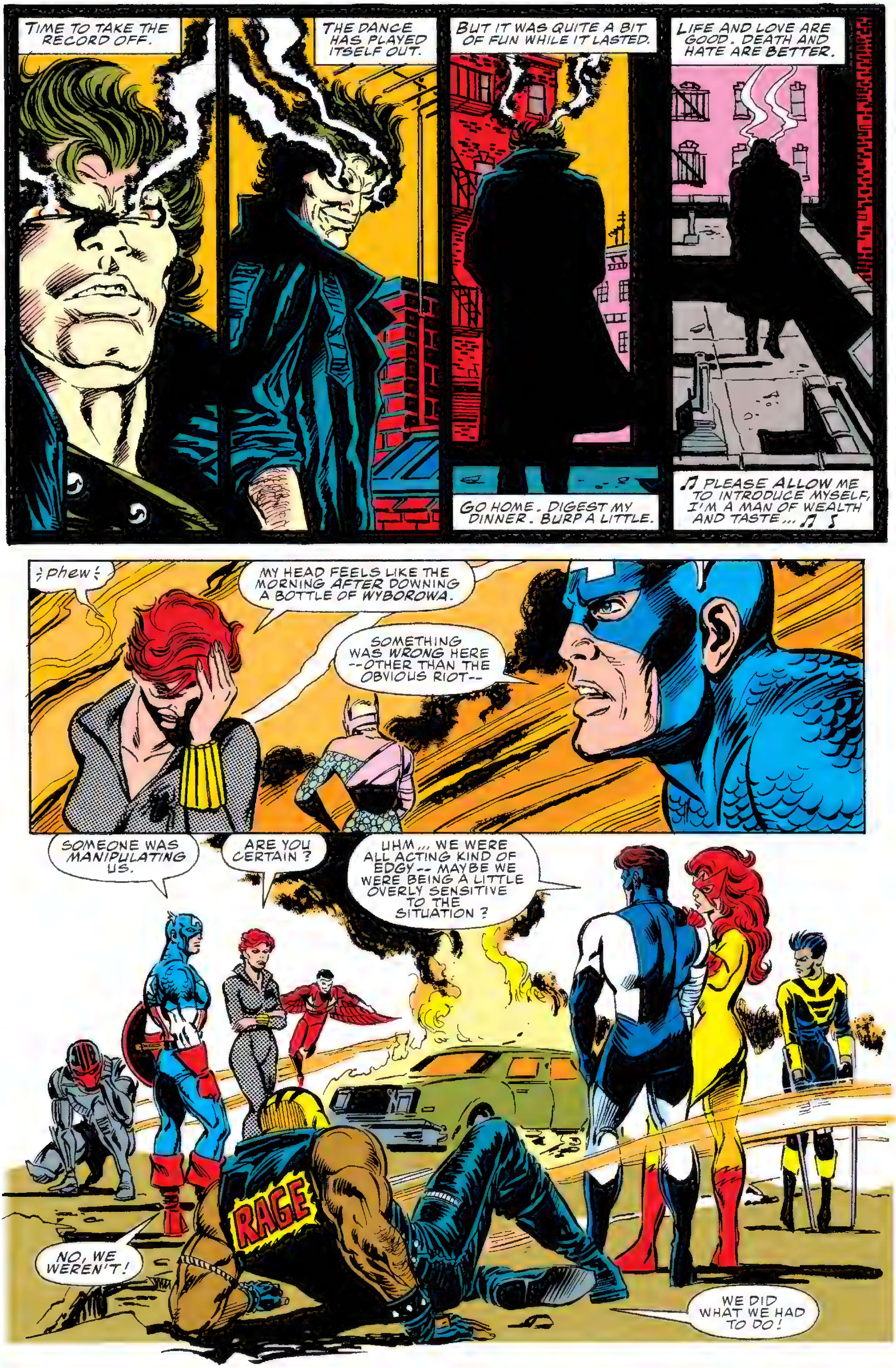
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

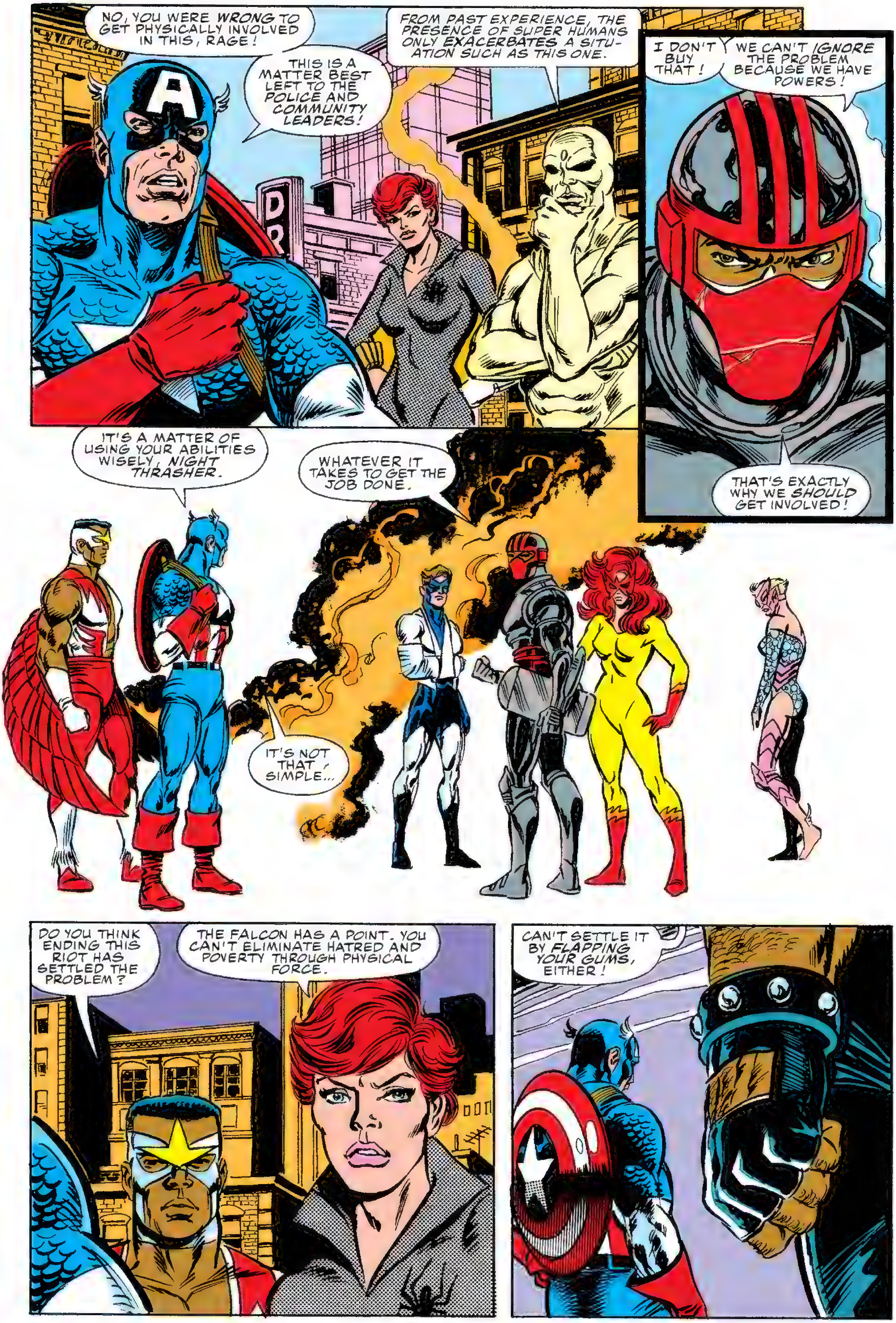

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
By Reason of INSANITY?
A tale of Fire & Fury brought to you by:
FABIAN NICIEZA GUEST WRITER
STEVEN EPTING PENCILER
TOM PALMER INKER
BILL OAKLEY LETTERER
ROB TOKAR COLORIST
RALPH MACCHIO LATE MONGER
TOM DeFALCO PLATE MONGER

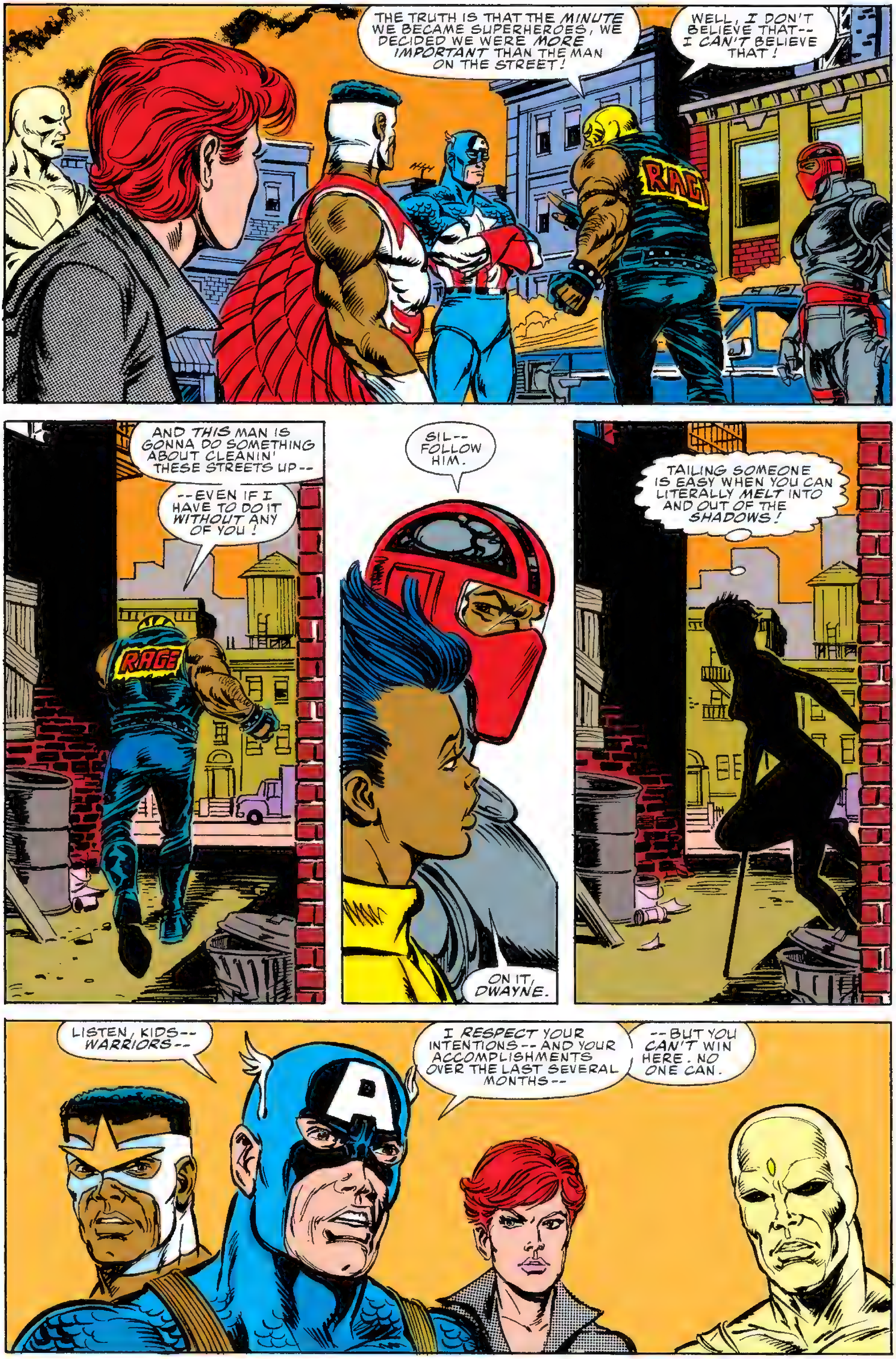

WHAT'S WHAT? WELL... A VIDEOTAPED POLICE ASSAULT ON A SUSPECTED THIEF, CARMELLO MARTINEZ, HAD TURNED THE CANARSIE SECTION OF BROOKLYN, NEW YORK INTO A POWDERKEG WAITING TO EXPLODE!
AND THE UNITED NATIONS' SUPER HUMAN STRIKEFORCE, THE AVENGERS, HAVE ARRIVED BECAUSE THE POWDERKEG SITUATION HAS JUST EXPLODED!
28TH
NYPD
AND ME?
JUST HANGING OUT, ENJOYING THE VIEW.
THE AVENGER NAMED RAGE BECAME INVOLVED WHILE TRYING TO MAINTAIN CALM IN HIS NEIGHBORHOOD--
--THE WHITE SUPREMACIST GROUP, THE SONS OF THE SERPENT BECAME INVOLVED TO DO JUST THE OPPOSITE!
THOSE REBELLIOUS YOUNG SUPERKIDS KNOWN AS THE NEW WARRIORS CAME ALONG BECAUSE IT'S THE KIND OF TROUBLE THEY TEND TO STICK THEIR ZIT-RIDDLED NOSES INTO!
TAKING MY OWN LITTLE BITE OUT OF THE BIG APPLE... DON'T MIND THE MAGGOTS...
♪SHADOOBIE. SHATTERED.♪

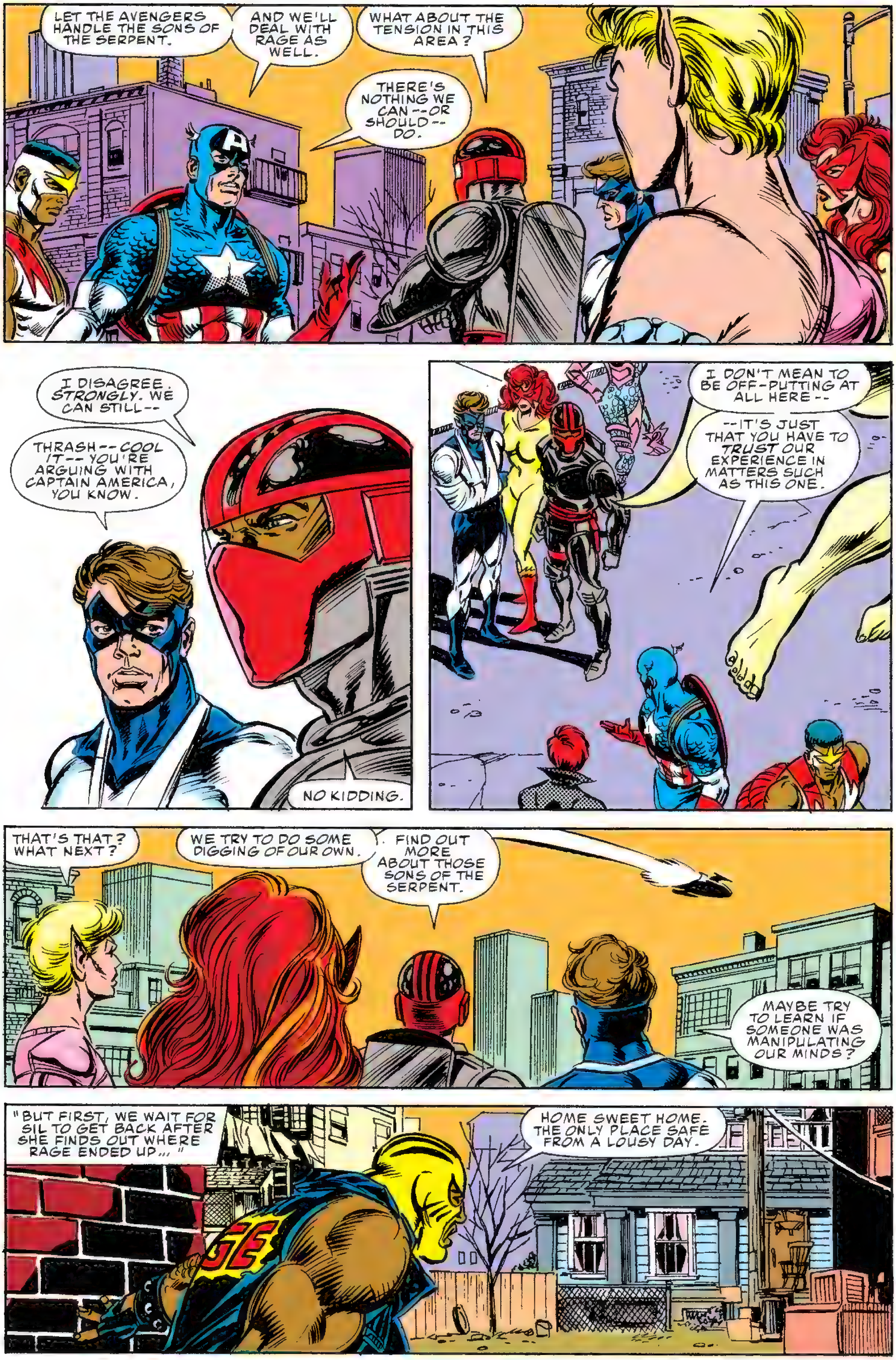

COPS FIRE TEAR GAS INTO THE CROWD. I GOT 'EM ALL WHIPPED UP INTO A NICE, SALIVATING FRENZY...
OFFICER-- DON'T-- LET US--
LET YOU DO NOTHING!
AVENGERS' LEADER, CAPTAIN AMERICA. THE VOICE OF REASON.
WARRIORS' ERSATZ LEADER, NIGHT THRASHER. THE SCREAM OF REASON.
GIVE IT A TUG AND A PLAY...
THRASHER--NO--!
YOU CAN'T COME IN HERE TAKING OVER LIKE YOU ALWAYS DO!
THIS ISN'T ABOUT EGO, SON--IT'S ABOUT SAVING LIVES!
BOY, IS HE A RIGHTEOUS ONE, OR WHAT?
AND HE IS REVERED... BY MARVEL BOY... OH, THIS IS TOO MUCH FUN...
THRASH-- AND CAP?
GEEZ.
CAPTAIN, PLEASE--STAY OFF MY TEAMMATE!
NUDGE THE BRAT JUST ENOUGH SO HIS TELEKINETIC PUSH IS TOO HARD...

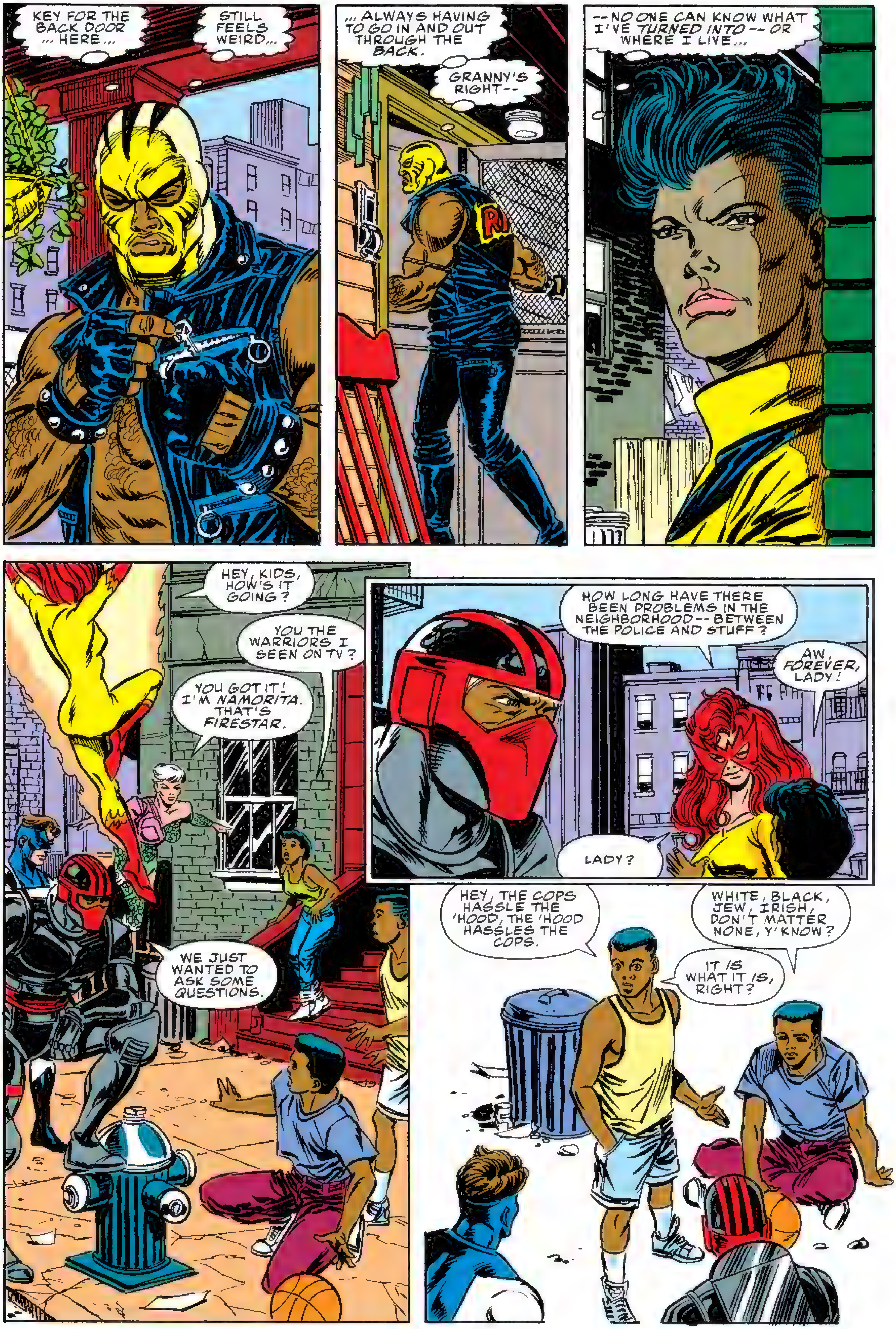

LAY OFF, KID!
NNFGGH
HEY, WHAT'S BLACK AND WHITE AND RED ALL OVER?
CANARSIE! HAH. I KILL ME. I KILL THEM, TOO.
VISION?! WHAT DO YOU WANT, MAN?
I WOULD LIKE YOU TO UNHAND THAT MAN, *RAGE*, AND ASSIST US IN RESTORING CALM TO THIS NEIGHBORHOOD.
FAT CHANCE OF THAT HAPPENING! *HE'S* CAUSED MOST OF THE PROBLEMS!
ODD, THAT THE EMOTIONS OF EVERYONE ARE SO RAW AND UNCONTROLLABLE.
DON'T MAKE ME HURT YOU!
DON'T MAKE ME *LAUGH*!
KEEP ON THE WIDOW, *SILHOUETTE*--
--I'LL NAIL HER FROM BEHIND WITH A *MICROWAVE BLAST*!
PILE INTO THE VAN--CUT OUR LOSSES AND CLEAR OUT!
KRYZEWSKI--LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
NO PARKING

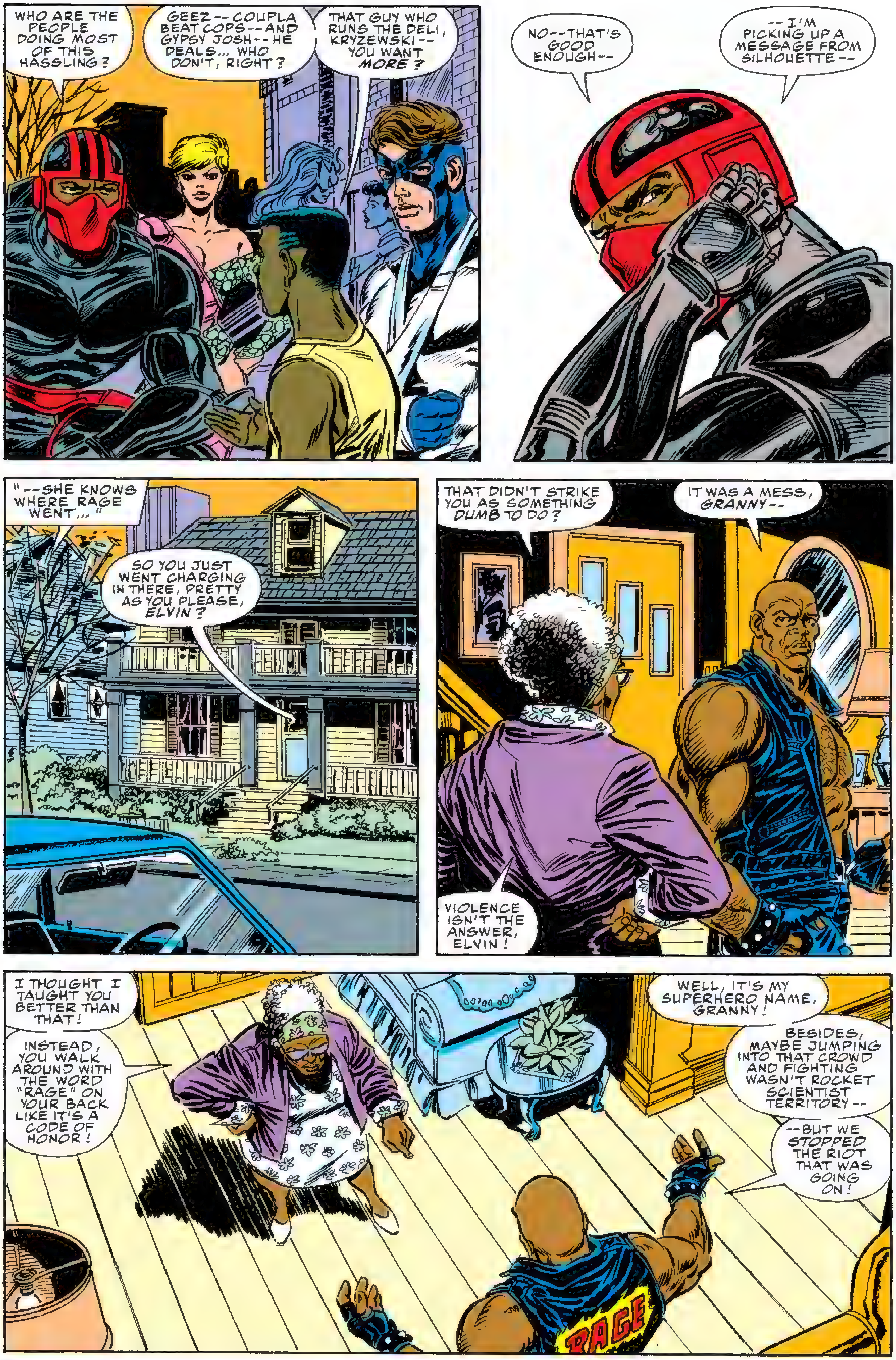

TIME TO TAKE THE RECORD OFF.
THE DANCE HAS PLAYED ITSELF OUT.
BUT IT WAS QUITE A BIT OF FUN WHILE IT LASTED.
GO HOME. DIGEST MY DINNER. BURP A LITTLE.
LIFE AND LOVE ARE GOOD. DEATH AND HATE ARE BETTER.
♫ PLEASE ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF, I'M A MAN OF WEALTH AND TASTE... ♫
phew
MY HEAD FEELS LIKE THE MORNING AFTER DOWNING A BOTTLE OF WYBOROWA.
SOMETHING WAS WRONG HERE --OTHER THAN THE OBVIOUS RIOT--
SOMEONE WAS MANIPULATING US.
ARE YOU CERTAIN ?
UHM... WE WERE ALL ACTING KIND OF EDGY-- MAYBE WE WERE BEING A LITTLE OVERLY SENSITIVE TO THE SITUATION ?
RAGE
NO, WE WEREN'T!
WE DID WHAT WE HAD TO DO!

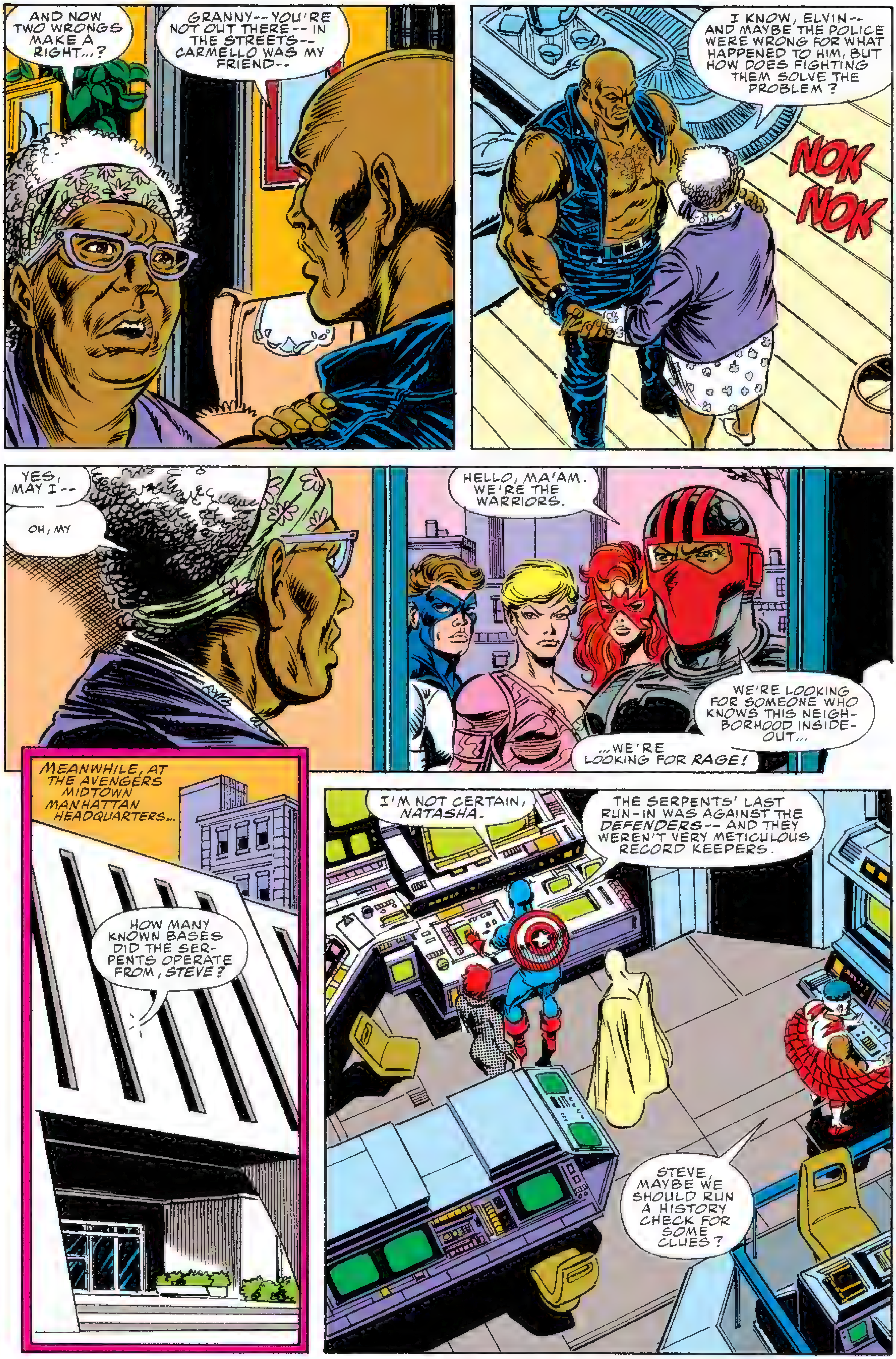

NO, YOU WERE *WRONG* TO GET PHYSICALLY INVOLVED IN THIS, RAGE!
THIS IS A MATTER BEST LEFT TO THE POLICE AND COMMUNITY LEADERS!
FROM PAST EXPERIENCE, THE PRESENCE OF SUPER HUMANS ONLY *EXACERBATES* A SITUATION SUCH AS THIS ONE.
I DON'T BUY THAT!
WE CAN'T *IGNORE* THE PROBLEM BECAUSE WE HAVE POWERS!
THAT'S EXACTLY WHY WE *SHOULD* GET INVOLVED!
IT'S A MATTER OF USING YOUR ABILITIES WISELY, *NIGHT THRASHER*.
WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET THE JOB DONE.
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE...
DO YOU THINK ENDING THIS RIOT HAS SETTLED THE PROBLEM?
THE FALCON HAS A POINT. YOU CAN'T ELIMINATE HATRED AND POVERTY THROUGH PHYSICAL FORCE.
CAN'T SETTLE IT BY *FLAPPING YOUR GUMS*, EITHER!

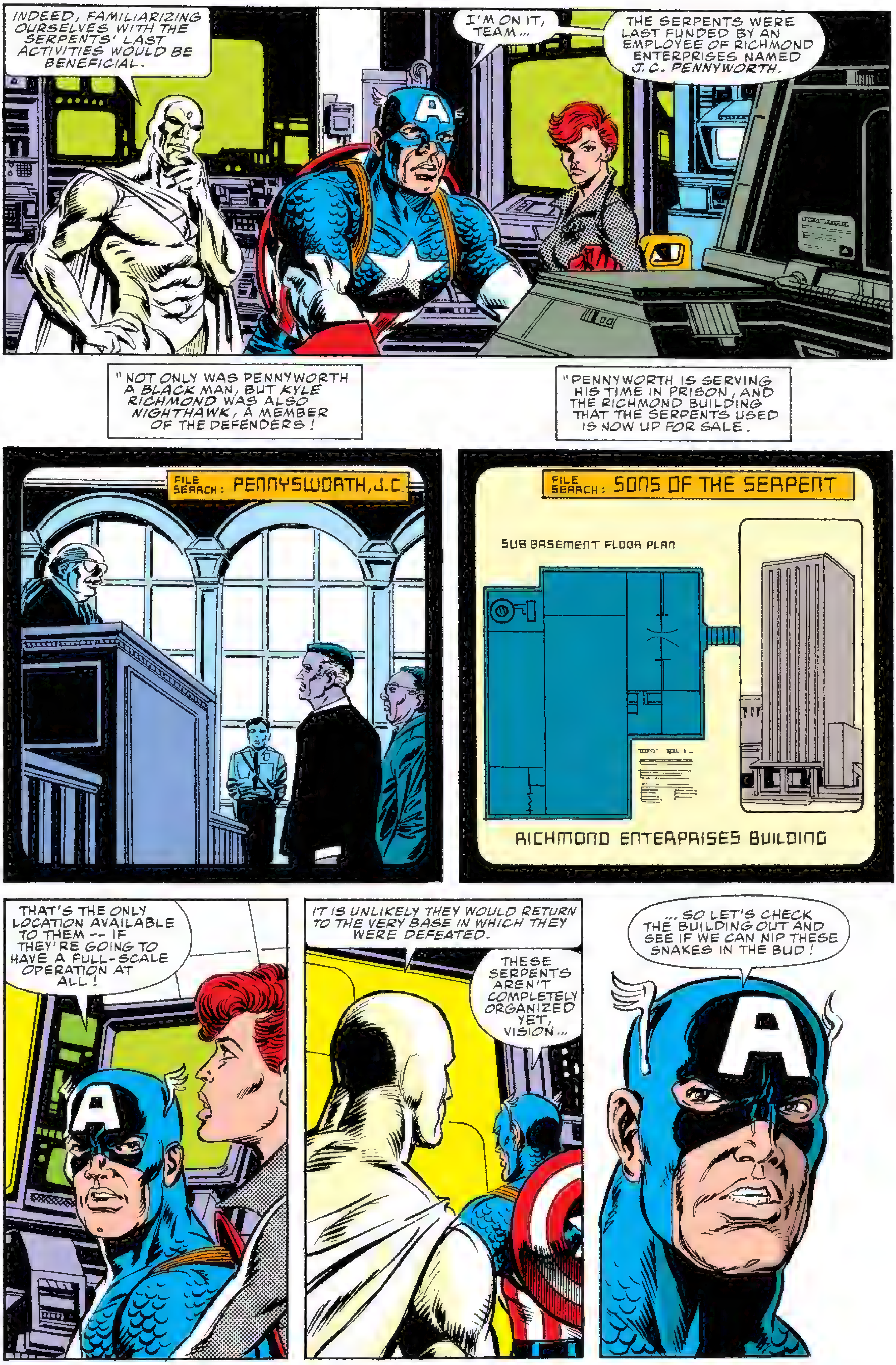

THE TRUTH IS THAT THE *MINUTE* WE BECAME SUPERHEROES, WE DECIDED WE WERE *MORE IMPORTANT* THAN THE MAN ON THE STREET!
WELL, *I* DON'T BELIEVE THAT-- *I CAN'T* BELIEVE THAT!
RAGE
AND *THIS* MAN IS GONNA DO SOMETHING ABOUT CLEANIN' THESE STREETS UP--
--EVEN IF I HAVE TO DO IT *WITHOUT* ANY OF YOU!
RAGE
SIL-- FOLLOW HIM.
ON IT, DWAYNE.
TAILING SOMEONE IS EASY WHEN YOU CAN LITERALLY *MELT* INTO AND OUT OF THE *SHADOWS*!
LISTEN, KIDS-- *WARRIORS*--
I *RESPECT* YOUR INTENTIONS-- AND YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS--
--BUT YOU *CAN'T* WIN HERE. NO ONE CAN.

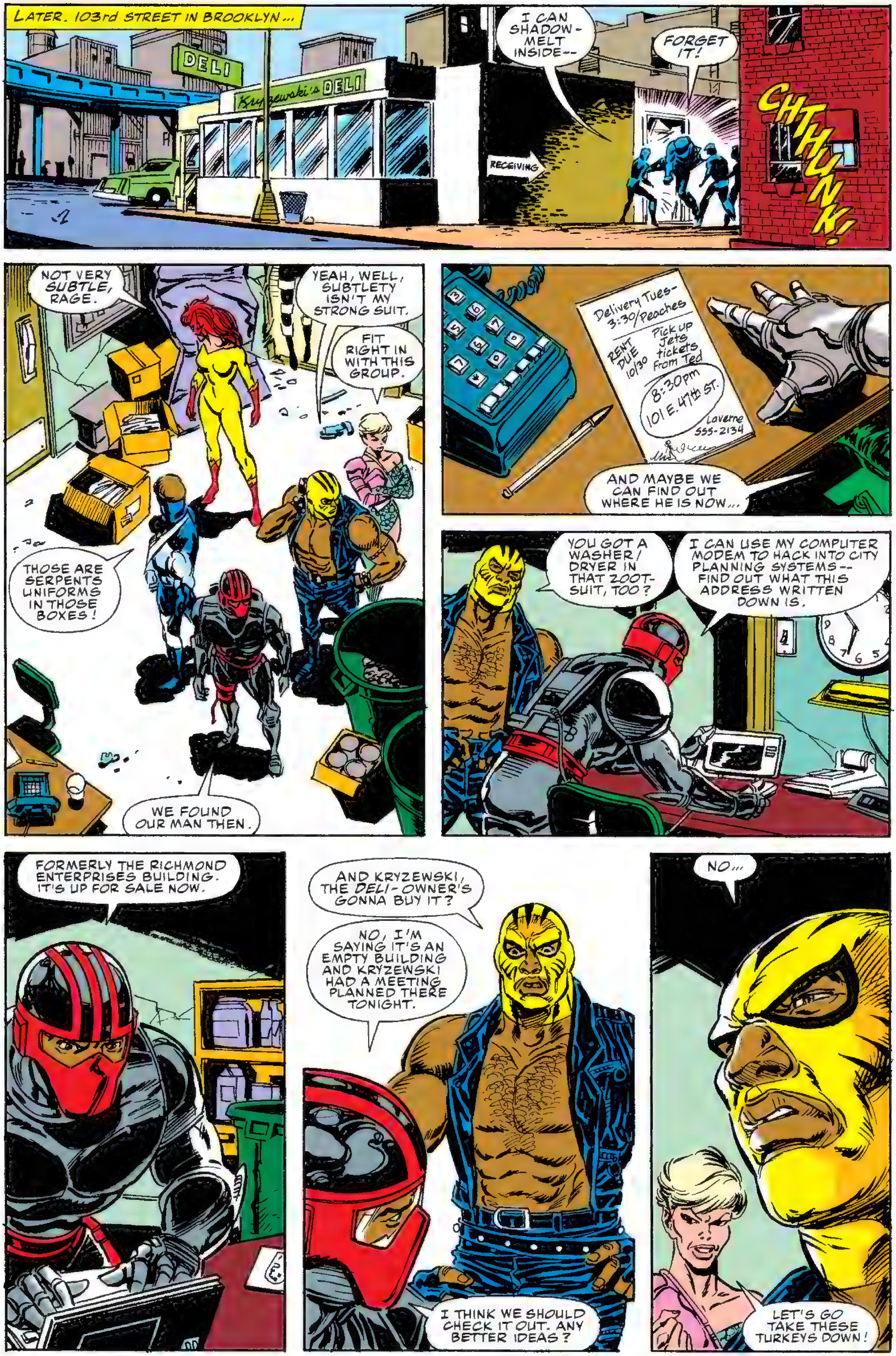

LET THE AVENGERS HANDLE THE SONS OF THE SERPENT.
AND WE'LL DEAL WITH RAGE AS WELL.
WHAT ABOUT THE TENSION IN THIS AREA?
THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN--OR SHOULD--DO.
I DISAGREE. STRONGLY. WE CAN STILL--
THRASH--COOL IT--YOU'RE ARGUING WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA, YOU KNOW.
NO KIDDING.
I DON'T MEAN TO BE OFF-PUTTING AT ALL HERE--
--IT'S JUST THAT YOU HAVE TO TRUST OUR EXPERIENCE IN MATTERS SUCH AS THIS ONE.
THAT'S THAT? WHAT NEXT?
WE TRY TO DO SOME DIGGING OF OUR OWN.
FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THOSE SONS OF THE SERPENT.
MAYBE TRY TO LEARN IF SOMEONE WAS MANIPULATING OUR MINDS?
"BUT FIRST, WE WAIT FOR SIL TO GET BACK AFTER SHE FINDS OUT WHERE RAGE ENDED UP..."
HOME SWEET HOME. THE ONLY PLACE SAFE FROM A LOUSY DAY.

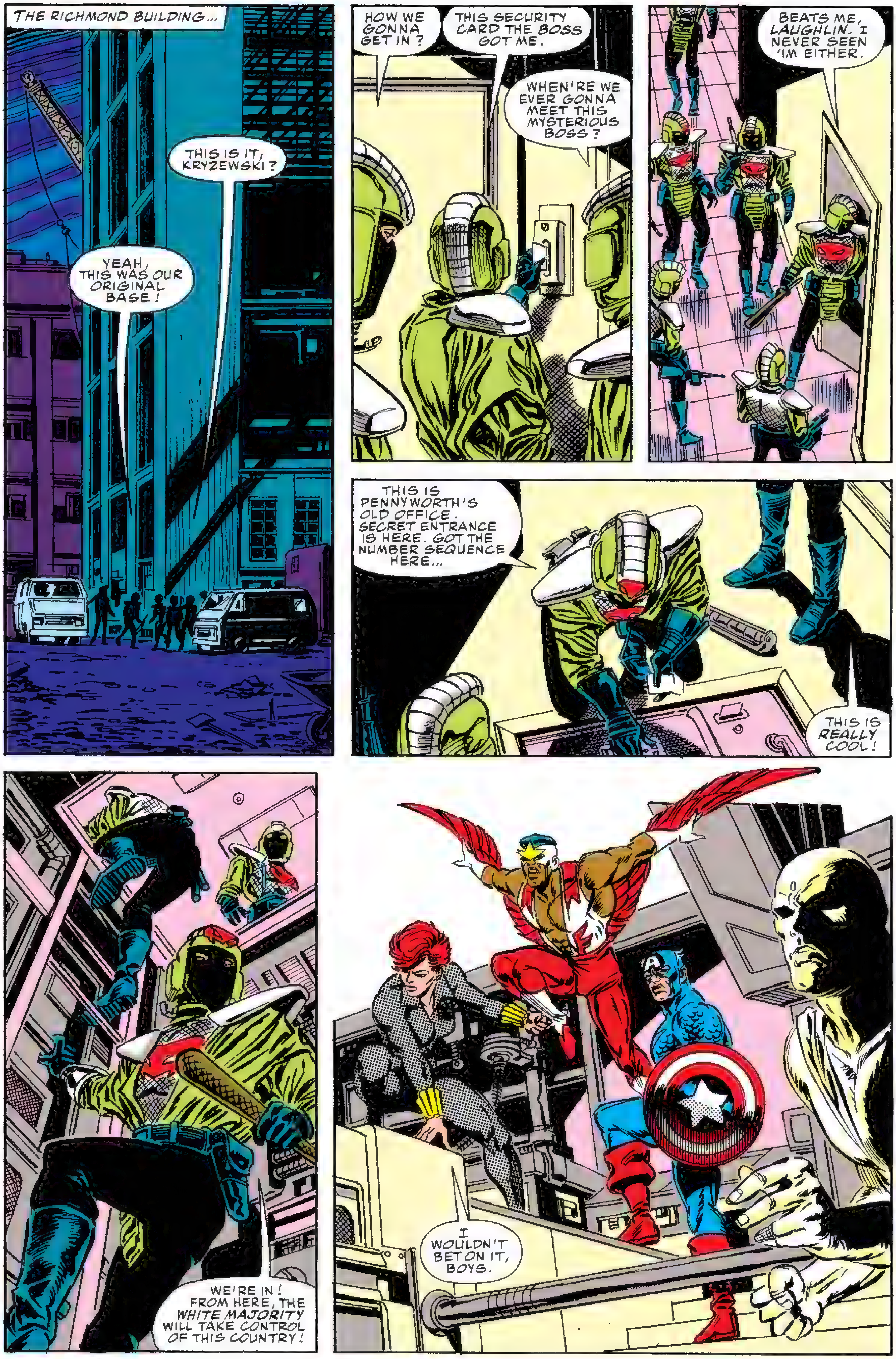

KEY FOR THE BACK DOOR ... HERE...
STILL FEELS WEIRD...
...ALWAYS HAVING TO GO IN AND OUT THROUGH THE *BACK*.
GRANNY'S RIGHT--
--NO ONE CAN KNOW WHAT I'VE *TURNED INTO*--OR WHERE I LIVE...
HEY, KIDS, HOW'S IT GOING?
YOU THE WARRIORS I SEEN ON TV?
YOU GOT IT! I'M *NAMORITA*. THAT'S *FIRESTAR*.
WE JUST WANTED TO ASK SOME QUESTIONS.
HOW LONG HAVE THERE BEEN PROBLEMS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD--BETWEEN THE POLICE AND STUFF?
AW, *FOREVER*, LADY!
LADY?
HEY, THE COPS HASSLE THE 'HOOD, THE 'HOOD HASSLES THE COPS.
WHITE, BLACK, JEW, IRISH, DON'T MATTER NONE, Y'KNOW?
IT *IS* WHAT IT *IS*, RIGHT?


WHO ARE THE PEOPLE DOING MOST OF THIS HASSLING?
GEEZ -- COUPLA BEAT COPS -- AND GYPSY JOSH -- HE DEALS... WHO DON'T, RIGHT?
THAT GUY WHO RUNS THE DELI, KRYZEWSKI -- YOU WANT MORE?
NO -- THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH --
-- I'M PICKING UP A MESSAGE FROM SILHOUETTE --
"-- SHE KNOWS WHERE RAGE WENT..."
SO YOU JUST WENT CHARGING IN THERE, PRETTY AS YOU PLEASE, ELVIN?
THAT DIDN'T STRIKE YOU AS SOMETHING DUMB TO DO?
IT WAS A MESS, GRANNY --
VIOLENCE ISN'T THE ANSWER, ELVIN!
I THOUGHT I TAUGHT YOU BETTER THAN THAT!
INSTEAD, YOU WALK AROUND WITH THE WORD "RAGE" ON YOUR BACK LIKE IT'S A CODE OF HONOR!
WELL, IT'S MY SUPERHERO NAME, GRANNY!
BESIDES, MAYBE JUMPING INTO THAT CROWD AND FIGHTING WASN'T ROCKET SCIENTIST TERRITORY --
-- BUT WE STOPPED THE RIOT THAT WAS GOING ON!
RAGE

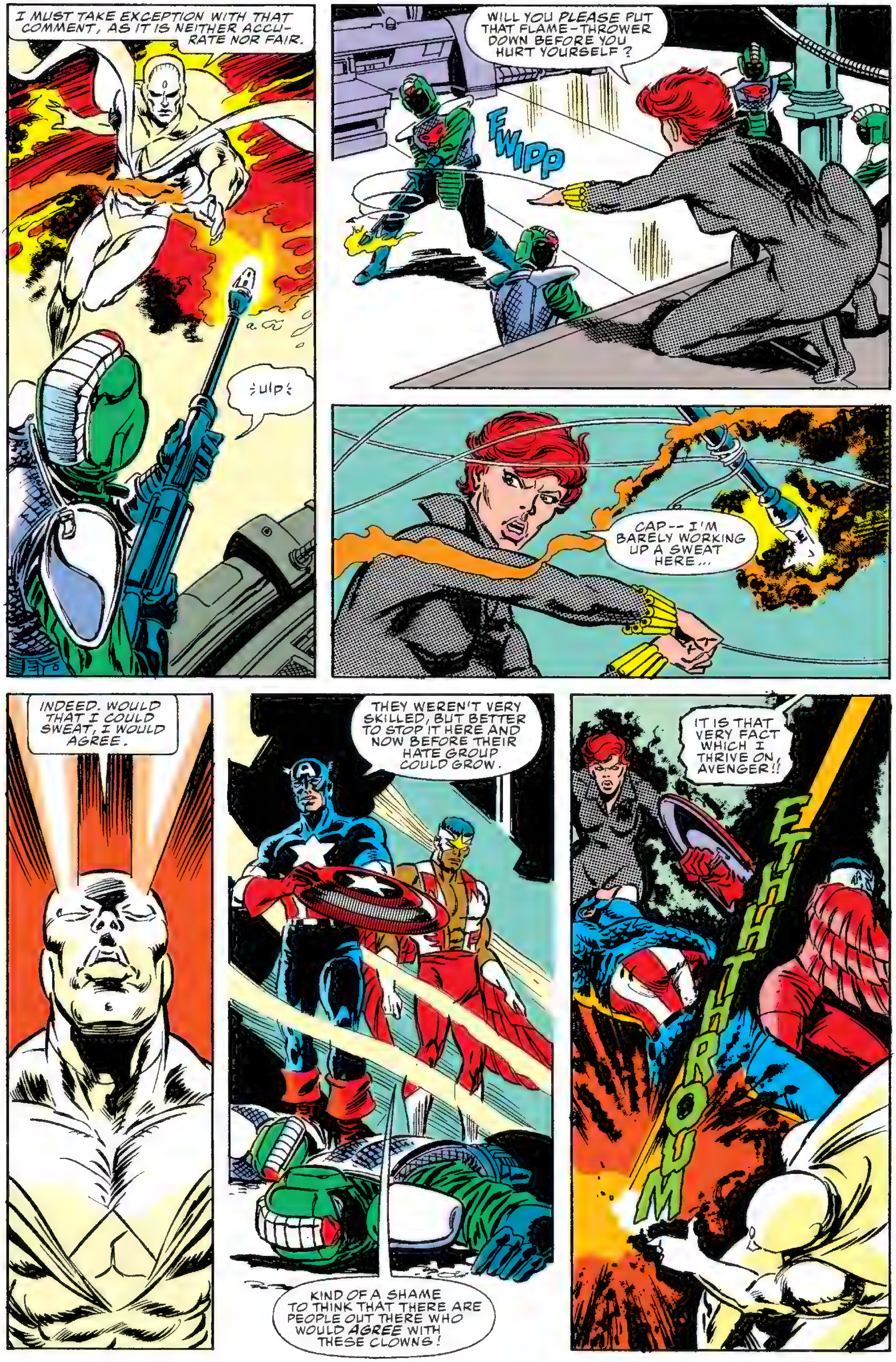

AND NOW TWO WRONGS MAKE A RIGHT...?
GRANNY--YOU'RE NOT OUT THERE--IN THE STREETS--CARMELLO WAS MY FRIEND--
I KNOW, ELVIN--AND MAYBE THE POLICE WERE WRONG FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM, BUT HOW DOES FIGHTING THEM SOLVE THE PROBLEM?
NOK NOK
YES, MAY I--
OH, MY
HELLO, MA'AM. WE'RE THE WARRIORS.
WE'RE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THIS NEIGHBORHOOD INSIDE-OUT...
...WE'RE LOOKING FOR RAGE!
MEANWHILE, AT THE AVENGERS MIDTOWN MANHATTAN HEADQUARTERS...
HOW MANY KNOWN BASES DID THE SERPENTS OPERATE FROM, STEVE?
I'M NOT CERTAIN, NATASHA.
THE SERPENTS' LAST RUN-IN WAS AGAINST THE DEFENDERS--AND THEY WEREN'T VERY METICULOUS RECORD KEEPERS.
STEVE, MAYBE WE SHOULD RUN A HISTORY CHECK FOR SOME CLUES?

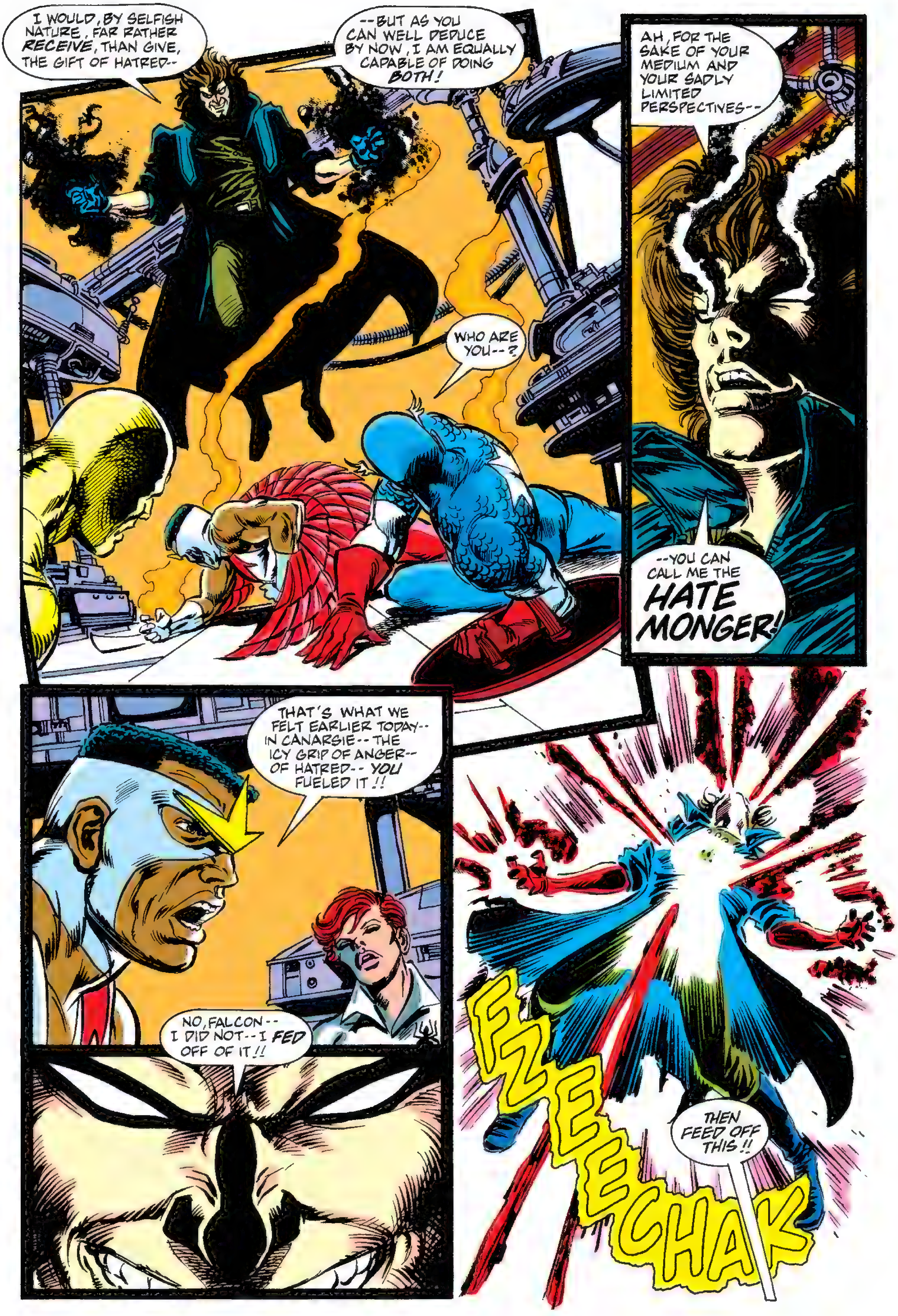

INDEED, FAMILIARIZING OURSELVES WITH THE SERPENTS' LAST ACTIVITIES WOULD BE BENEFICIAL.
I'M ON IT, TEAM...
THE SERPENTS WERE LAST FUNDED BY AN EMPLOYEE OF RICHMOND ENTERPRISES NAMED J.C. PENNYWORTH.
"NOT ONLY WAS PENNYWORTH A BLACK MAN, BUT KYLE RICHMOND WAS ALSO NIGHTHAWK, A MEMBER OF THE DEFENDERS!
"PENNYWORTH IS SERVING HIS TIME IN PRISON, AND THE RICHMOND BUILDING THAT THE SERPENTS USED IS NOW UP FOR SALE.
FILE SEARCH: PENNYSWORTH, J.C.
FILE SEARCH: SONS OF THE SERPENT
SUB BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN
RICHMOND ENTERPRISES BUILDING
THAT'S THE ONLY LOCATION AVAILABLE TO THEM -- IF THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE A FULL-SCALE OPERATION AT ALL!
IT IS UNLIKELY THEY WOULD RETURN TO THE VERY BASE IN WHICH THEY WERE DEFEATED.
THESE SERPENTS AREN'T COMPLETELY ORGANIZED YET, VISION...
...SO LET'S CHECK THE BUILDING OUT AND SEE IF WE CAN NIP THESE SNAKES IN THE BUD!

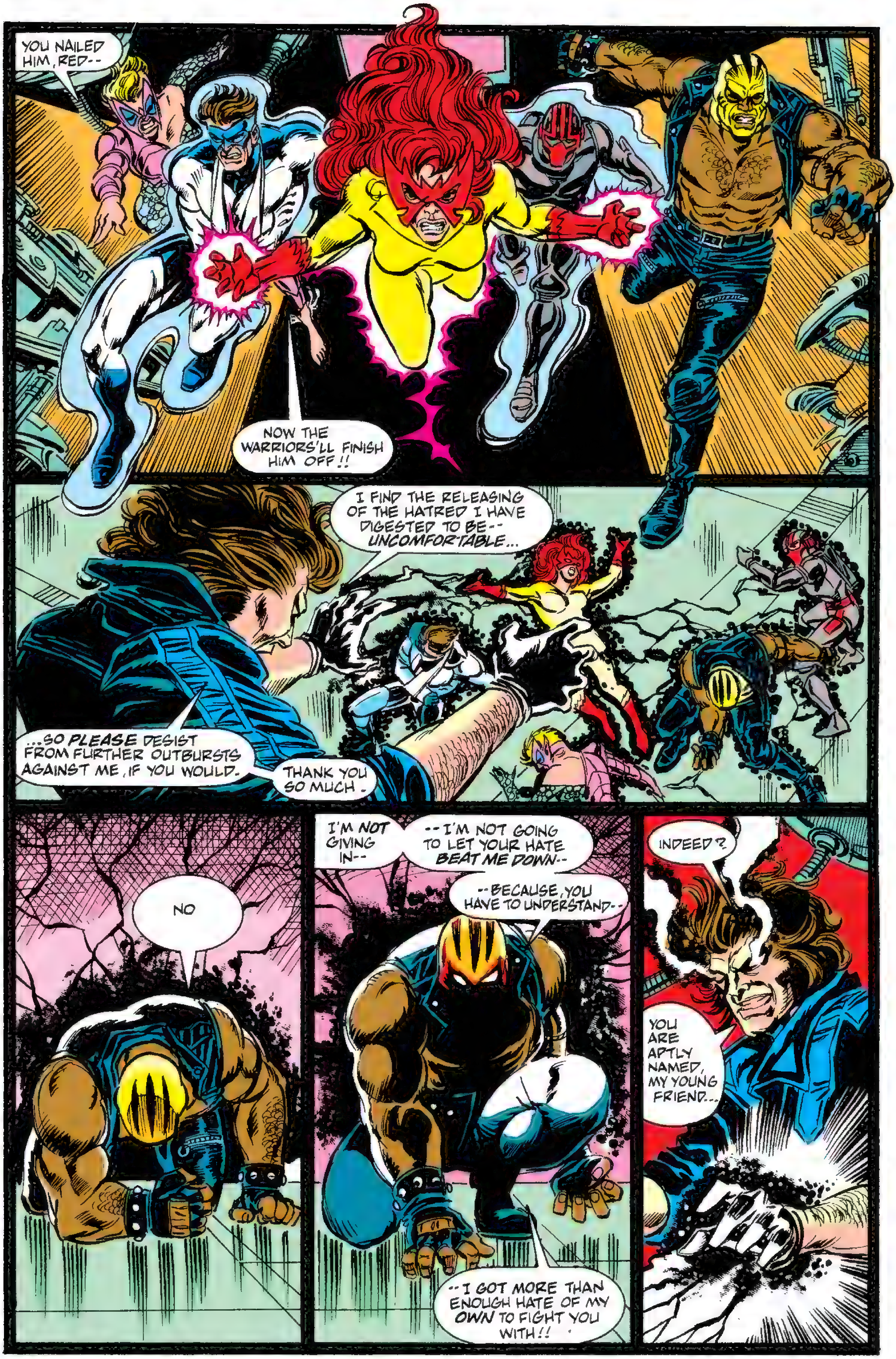

LATER. 103rd STREET IN BROOKLYN...
DELI
Kryzewski's DELI
RECEIVING
I CAN SHADOW-MELT INSIDE--
FORGET IT!
CHTHUNK!
NOT VERY SUBTLE, RAGE.
YEAH, WELL, SUBTLETY ISN'T MY STRONG SUIT.
FIT RIGHT IN WITH THIS GROUP.
THOSE ARE SERPENTS UNIFORMS IN THOSE BOXES!
WE FOUND OUR MAN THEN.
Delivery Tues- 3:30/Peaches
RENT DUE 10/30
Pick up Jets tickets From Ted
8:30pm 101 E. 47th ST.
Laverne 555-2134
AND MAYBE WE CAN FIND OUT WHERE HE IS NOW...
YOU GOT A WASHER/DRYER IN THAT ZOOT-SUIT, TOO?
I CAN USE MY COMPUTER MODEM TO HACK INTO CITY PLANNING SYSTEMS-- FIND OUT WHAT THIS ADDRESS WRITTEN DOWN IS.
FORMERLY THE RICHMOND ENTERPRISES BUILDING. IT'S UP FOR SALE NOW.
AND KRYZEWSKI, THE DELI-OWNER'S GONNA BUY IT?
NO, I'M SAYING IT'S AN EMPTY BUILDING AND KRYZEWSKI HAD A MEETING PLANNED THERE TONIGHT.
I THINK WE SHOULD CHECK IT OUT. ANY BETTER IDEAS?
NO...
LET'S GO TAKE THESE TURKEYS DOWN!

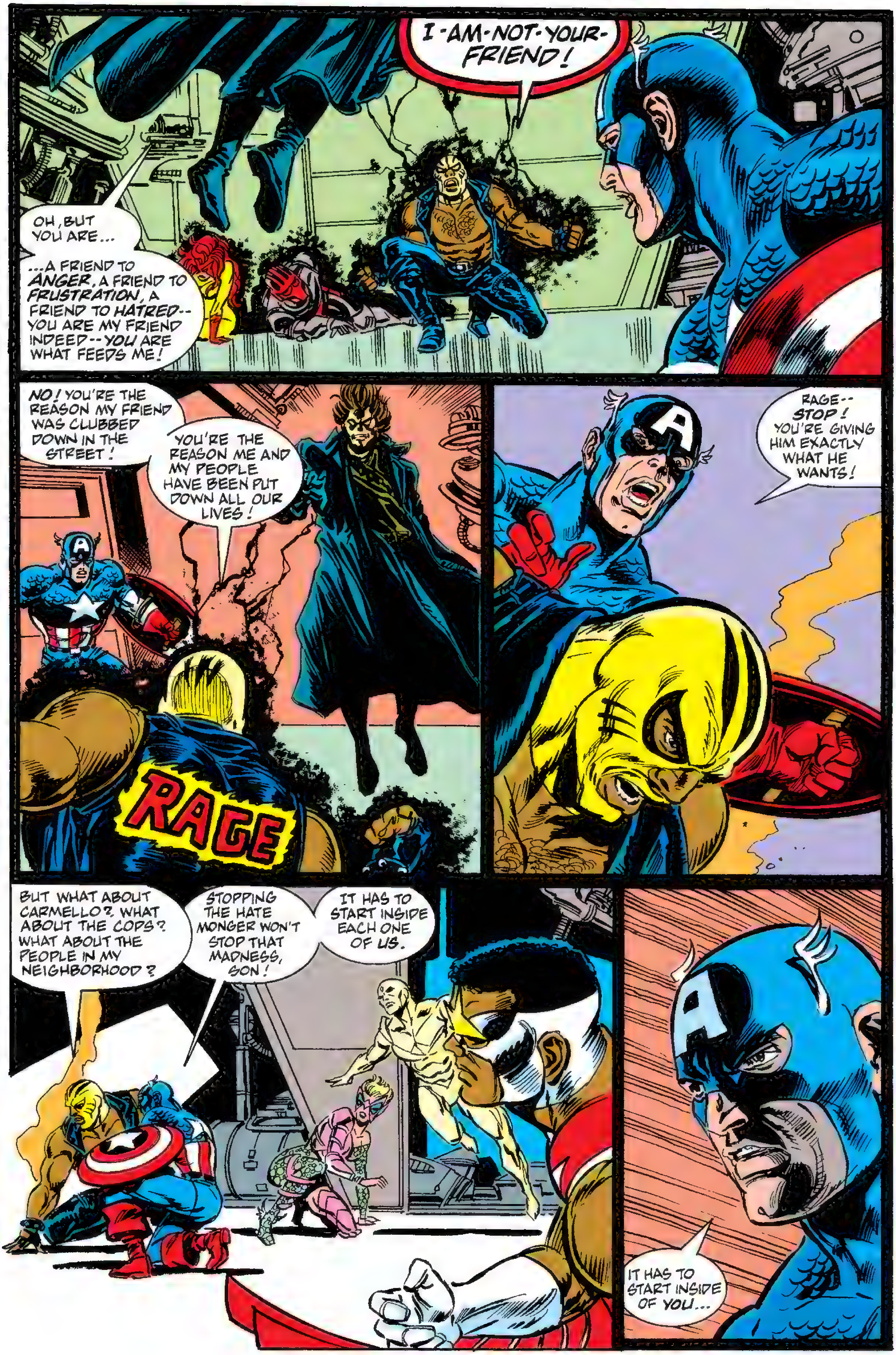

THE RICHMOND BUILDING...
THIS IS IT, KRYZEWSKI?
YEAH, THIS WAS OUR ORIGINAL BASE!
HOW WE GONNA GET IN?
THIS SECURITY CARD THE BOSS GOT ME.
WHEN'RE WE EVER GONNA MEET THIS MYSTERIOUS BOSS?
BEATS ME, LAUGHLIN. I NEVER SEEN 'IM EITHER.
THIS IS PENNYWORTH'S OLD OFFICE. SECRET ENTRANCE IS HERE. GOT THE NUMBER SEQUENCE HERE...
THIS IS REALLY COOL!
WE'RE IN! FROM HERE, THE WHITE MAJORITY WILL TAKE CONTROL OF THIS COUNTRY!
I WOULDN'T BET ON IT, BOYS.

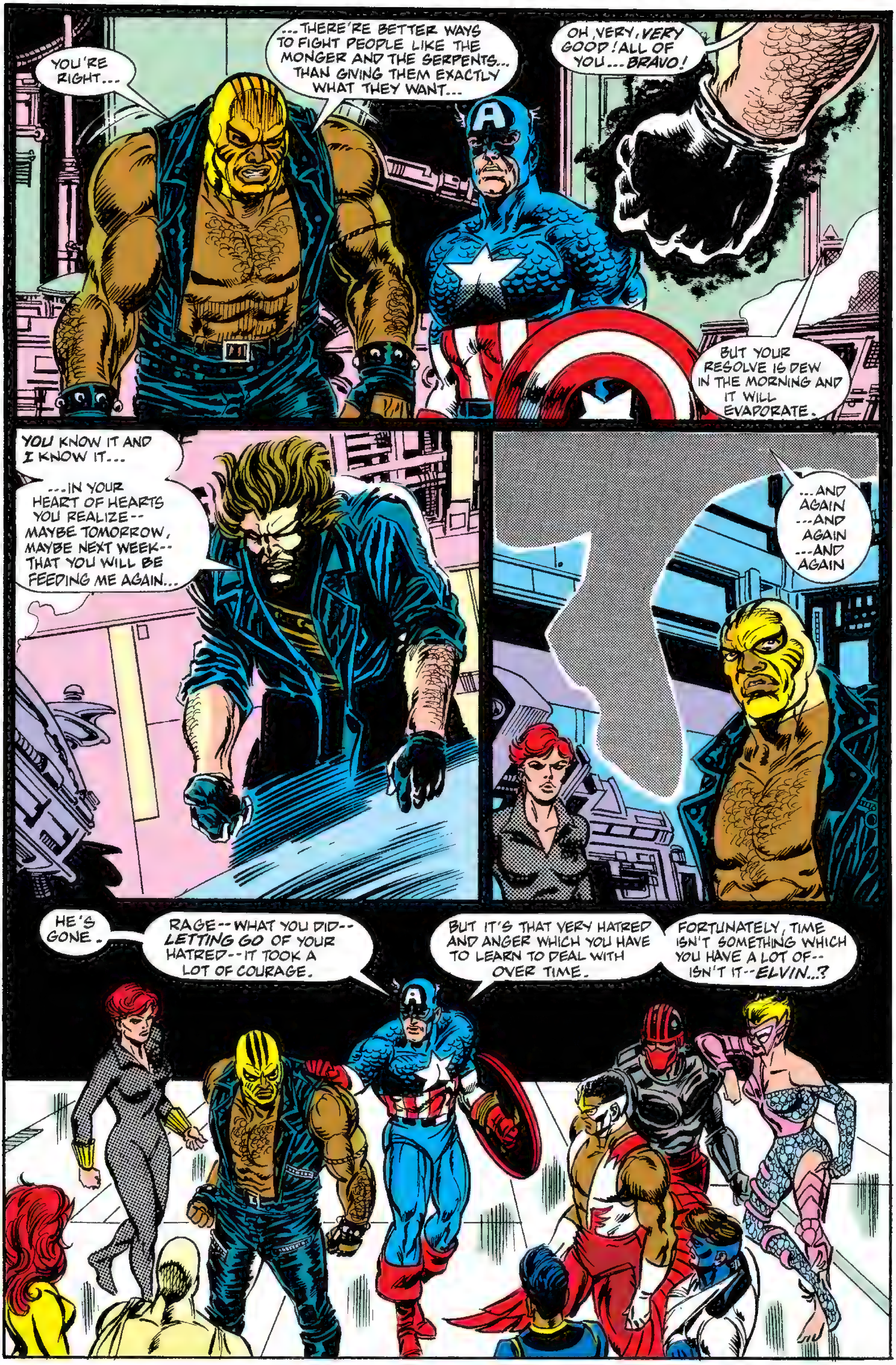
DO IT QUICKLY, DO IT CLEANLY!
FALCON-- MANEUVER TWELVE!
NAIL HIM! HE'S A DARKIE!
YOU GUYS ARE TOO STUPID TO EVEN FEEL A RIGHTEOUS ANGER TOWARDS!
AS IT IS, I JUST FEEL SORRY FOR YOU!
KCHANG!
BREAK OUT THE BIG GUNS! KILL THEM ALL!
B-BUT--THAT'S CAPTAIN AMERICA!
A LIBERAL PAWN OF THOSE WHO WOULD BASTARDIZE THE WHITE GENETIC SUPERIORITY IN THIS COUNTRY!

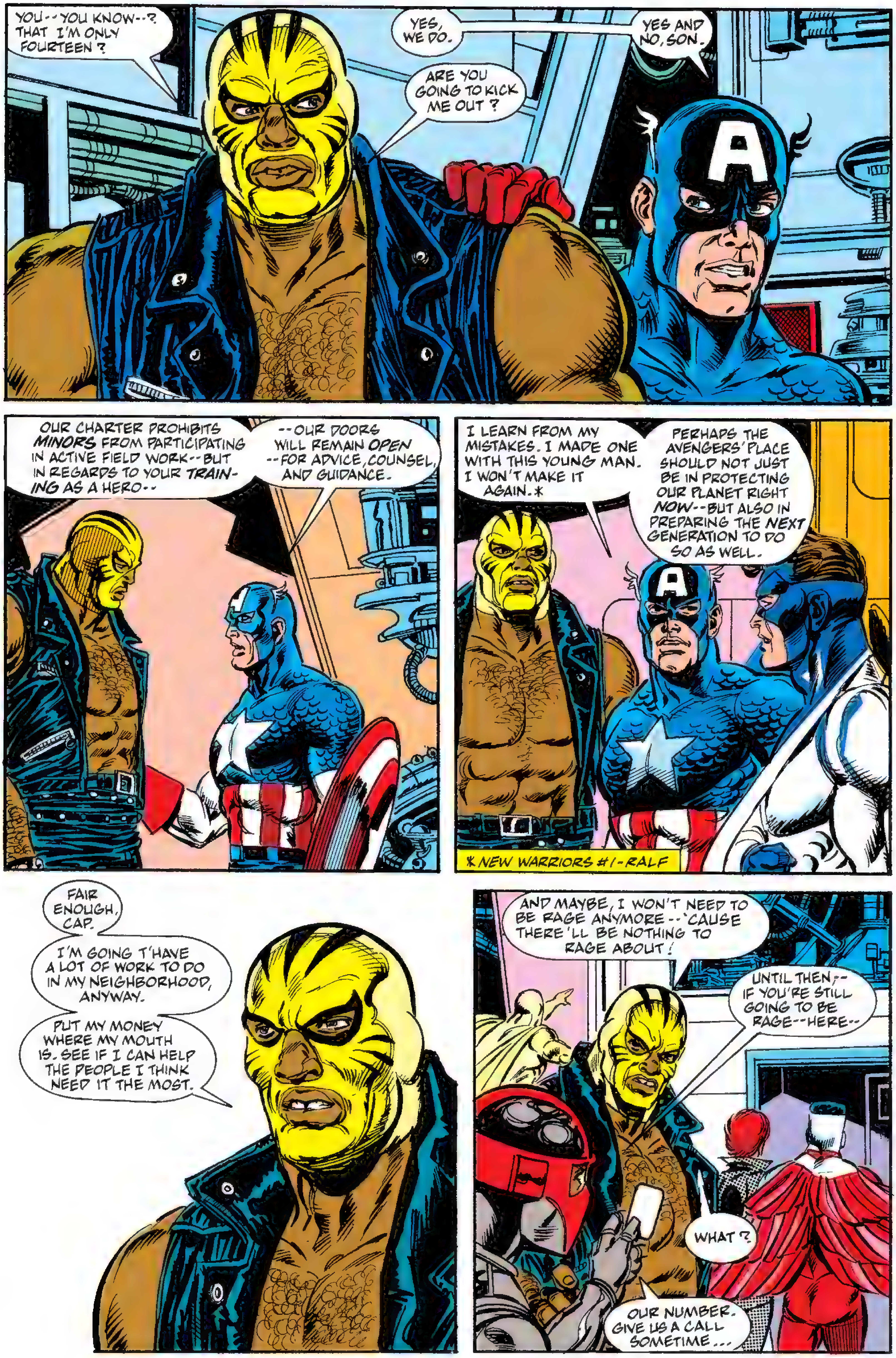

I MUST TAKE EXCEPTION WITH THAT COMMENT, AS IT IS NEITHER ACCURATE NOR FAIR.
;ulp;
WILL YOU *PLEASE* PUT THAT FLAME-THROWER DOWN BEFORE YOU HURT YOURSELF?
FWIPP
CAP-- I'M BARELY WORKING UP A SWEAT HERE...
INDEED. WOULD THAT I COULD SWEAT, I WOULD AGREE.
THEY WEREN'T VERY SKILLED, BUT BETTER TO STOP IT HERE AND NOW BEFORE THEIR HATE GROUP COULD GROW.
KIND OF A SHAME TO THINK THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO WOULD *AGREE* WITH THESE CLOWNS!
IT IS THAT VERY FACT WHICH I THRIVE ON, AVENGER!!
FTHHTHTHROUM

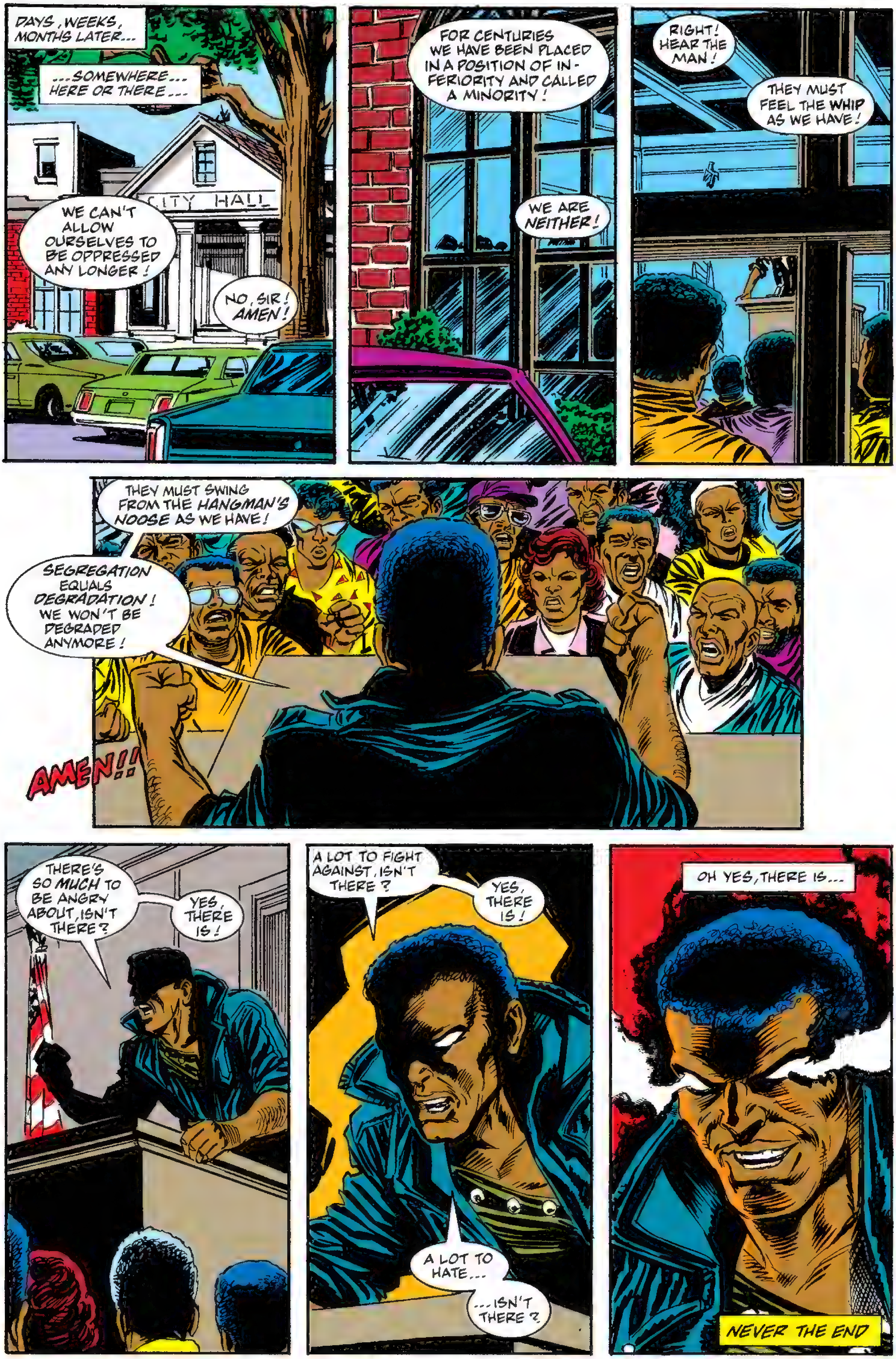

I WOULD, BY SELFISH NATURE, FAR RATHER *RECEIVE*, THAN GIVE, THE GIFT OF HATRED--
--BUT AS YOU CAN WELL DEDUCE BY NOW, I AM EQUALLY CAPABLE OF DOING *BOTH!*
WHO ARE YOU--?
AH, FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR MEDIUM AND YOUR SADLY LIMITED PERSPECTIVES--
--YOU CAN CALL ME THE **HATE MONGER!**
THAT'S WHAT WE FELT EARLIER TODAY-- IN CANARSIE-- THE ICY GRIP OF ANGER-- OF HATRED-- *YOU* FUELED IT!!
NO, FALCON-- I DID NOT-- I *FED* OFF OF IT!!
FZEECHAK
THEN FEED OFF THIS!!


YOU NAILED HIM, RED--
NOW THE WARRIORS'LL FINISH HIM OFF!!
I FIND THE RELEASING OF THE HATRED I HAVE DIGESTED TO BE-- *UNCOMFORTABLE*...
...SO *PLEASE* DESIST FROM FURTHER OUTBURSTS AGAINST ME, IF YOU WOULD.
THANK YOU SO MUCH.
NO
I'M *NOT* GIVING IN--
--I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOUR HATE *BEAT ME DOWN*--
--BECAUSE, YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND--
--I GOT MORE THAN ENOUGH HATE OF MY *OWN* TO FIGHT YOU WITH!!
INDEED?
YOU ARE APTLY NAMED, MY YOUNG FRIEND...

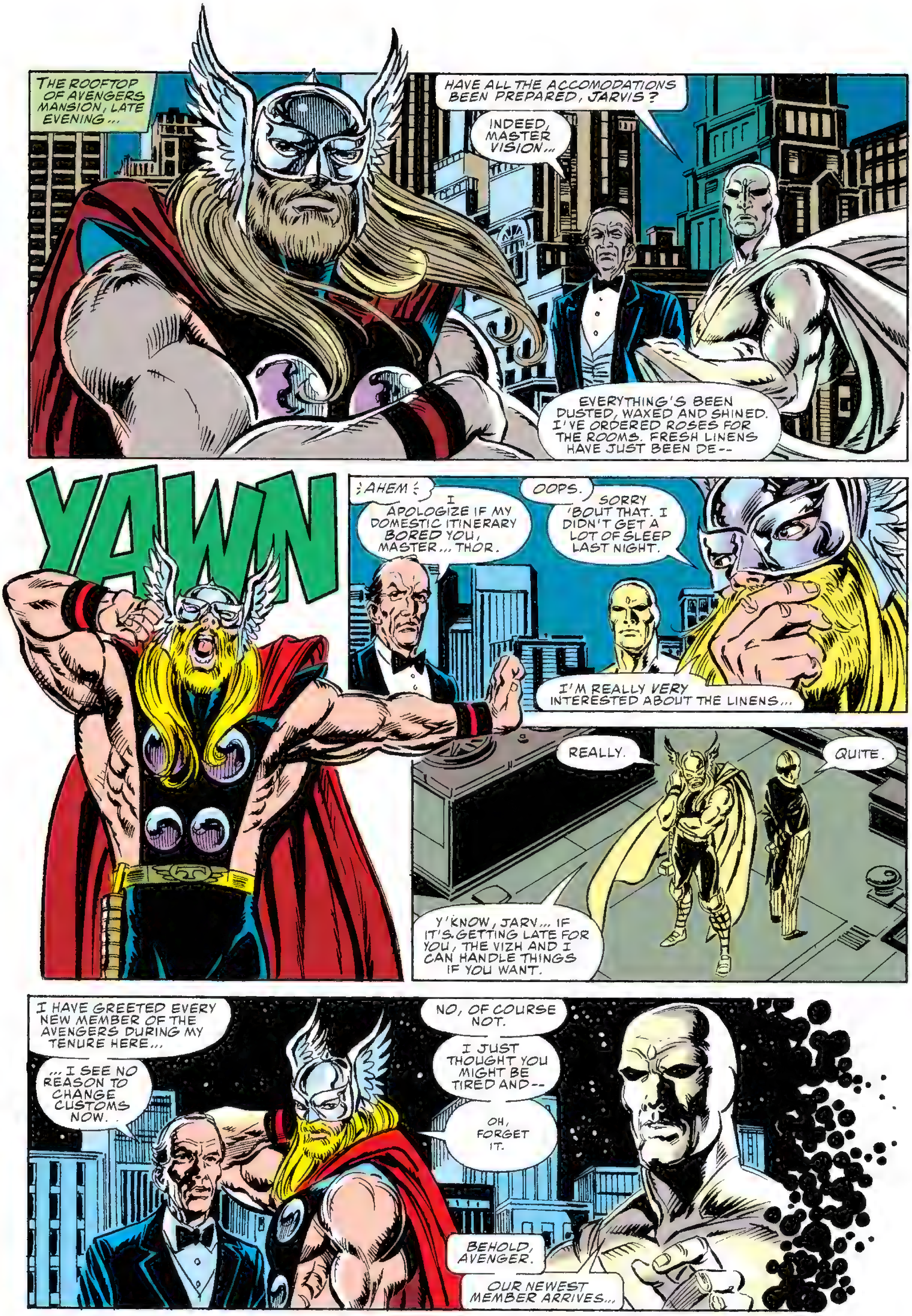

I-AM-NOT-YOUR-FRIEND!
OH, BUT YOU ARE...
...A FRIEND TO ANGER, A FRIEND TO FRUSTRATION, A FRIEND TO HATRED-- YOU ARE MY FRIEND INDEED--YOU ARE WHAT FEEDS ME!
NO! YOU'RE THE REASON MY FRIEND WAS CLUBBED DOWN IN THE STREET!
YOU'RE THE REASON ME AND MY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PUT DOWN ALL OUR LIVES!
RAGE
RAGE-- STOP! YOU'RE GIVING HIM EXACTLY WHAT HE WANTS!
BUT WHAT ABOUT CARMELLO? WHAT ABOUT THE COPS? WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD?
STOPPING THE HATE MONGER WON'T STOP THAT MADNESS, SON!
IT HAS TO START INSIDE EACH ONE OF US.
IT HAS TO START INSIDE OF YOU...


YOU'RE RIGHT...
...THERE'RE BETTER WAYS TO FIGHT PEOPLE LIKE THE MONGER AND THE SERPENTS... THAN GIVING THEM EXACTLY WHAT THEY WANT...
OH, VERY, *VERY* GOOD! ALL OF YOU... *BRAVO!*
BUT YOUR RESOLVE IS DEW IN THE MORNING AND IT WILL EVAPORATE.
YOU KNOW IT AND *I* KNOW IT...
...IN YOUR HEART OF HEARTS YOU REALIZE-- MAYBE TOMORROW, MAYBE NEXT WEEK-- THAT YOU WILL BE FEEDING ME AGAIN...
...AND AGAIN ...AND AGAIN ...AND AGAIN
HE'S GONE.
RAGE--WHAT YOU DID-- *LETTING GO* OF YOUR HATRED--IT TOOK A LOT OF COURAGE.
BUT IT'S THAT VERY HATRED AND ANGER WHICH YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO DEAL WITH OVER TIME.
FORTUNATELY, TIME ISN'T SOMETHING WHICH YOU HAVE A LOT OF-- ISN'T IT--*ELVIN*..?

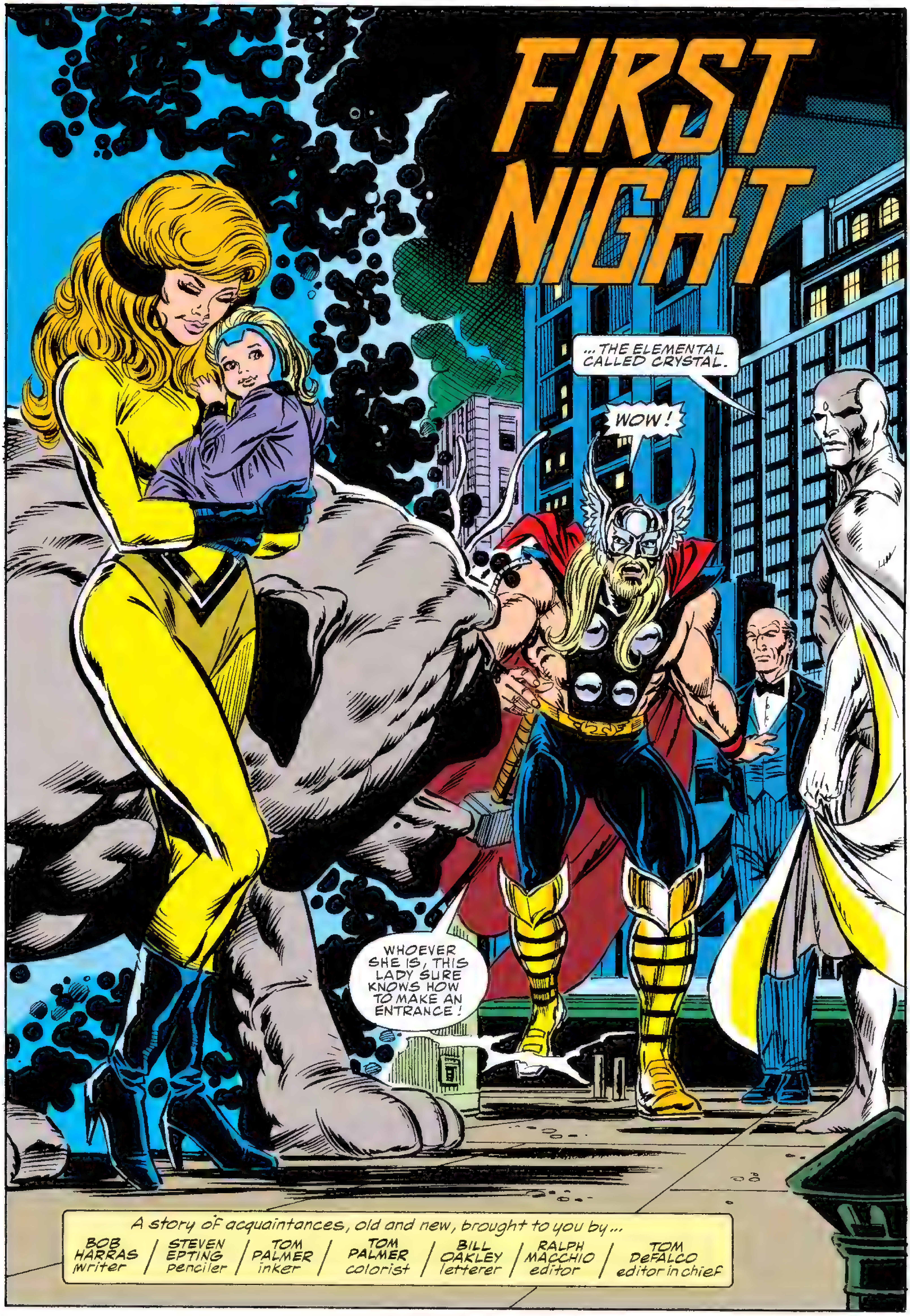

YOU--YOU KNOW--? THAT I'M ONLY FOURTEEN ?
ARE YOU GOING TO KICK ME OUT ?
YES, WE DO.
YES AND NO, SON.
OUR CHARTER PROHIBITS *MINORS* FROM PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVE FIELD WORK--BUT IN REGARDS TO YOUR *TRAINING* AS A HERO--
--OUR DOORS WILL REMAIN *OPEN* --FOR ADVICE, COUNSEL, AND GUIDANCE.
I LEARN FROM MY MISTAKES. I MADE ONE WITH THIS YOUNG MAN. I WON'T MAKE IT AGAIN.*
PERHAPS THE AVENGERS' PLACE SHOULD NOT JUST BE IN PROTECTING OUR PLANET RIGHT *NOW*--BUT ALSO IN PREPARING THE *NEXT* GENERATION TO DO SO AS WELL.
* *NEW WARRIORS #1 -- RALF*
FAIR ENOUGH, CAP.
I'M GOING T'HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD, ANYWAY.
PUT MY MONEY WHERE MY MOUTH IS. SEE IF I CAN HELP THE PEOPLE I THINK NEED IT THE MOST.
AND MAYBE, I WON'T NEED TO BE RAGE ANYMORE--'CAUSE THERE'LL BE NOTHING TO RAGE ABOUT!
UNTIL THEN,-- IF YOU'RE STILL GOING TO BE RAGE--HERE--
WHAT ?
OUR NUMBER. GIVE US A CALL SOMETIME...


DAYS, WEEKS, MONTHS LATER...
...SOMEWHERE... HERE OR THERE...
CITY HALL
WE CAN'T ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE OPPRESSED ANY LONGER!
NO, SIR! AMEN!
FOR CENTURIES WE HAVE BEEN PLACED IN A POSITION OF INFERIORITY AND CALLED A MINORITY!
WE ARE NEITHER!
RIGHT! HEAR THE MAN!
THEY MUST FEEL THE WHIP AS WE HAVE!
THEY MUST SWING FROM THE HANGMAN'S NOOSE AS WE HAVE!
SEGREGATION EQUALS DEGRADATION! WE WON'T BE DEGRADED ANYMORE!
AMEN!!
THERE'S SO MUCH TO BE ANGRY ABOUT, ISN'T THERE?
YES, THERE IS!
A LOT TO FIGHT AGAINST, ISN'T THERE?
YES, THERE IS!
A LOT TO HATE...
...ISN'T THERE?
OH YES, THERE IS...
NEVER THE END

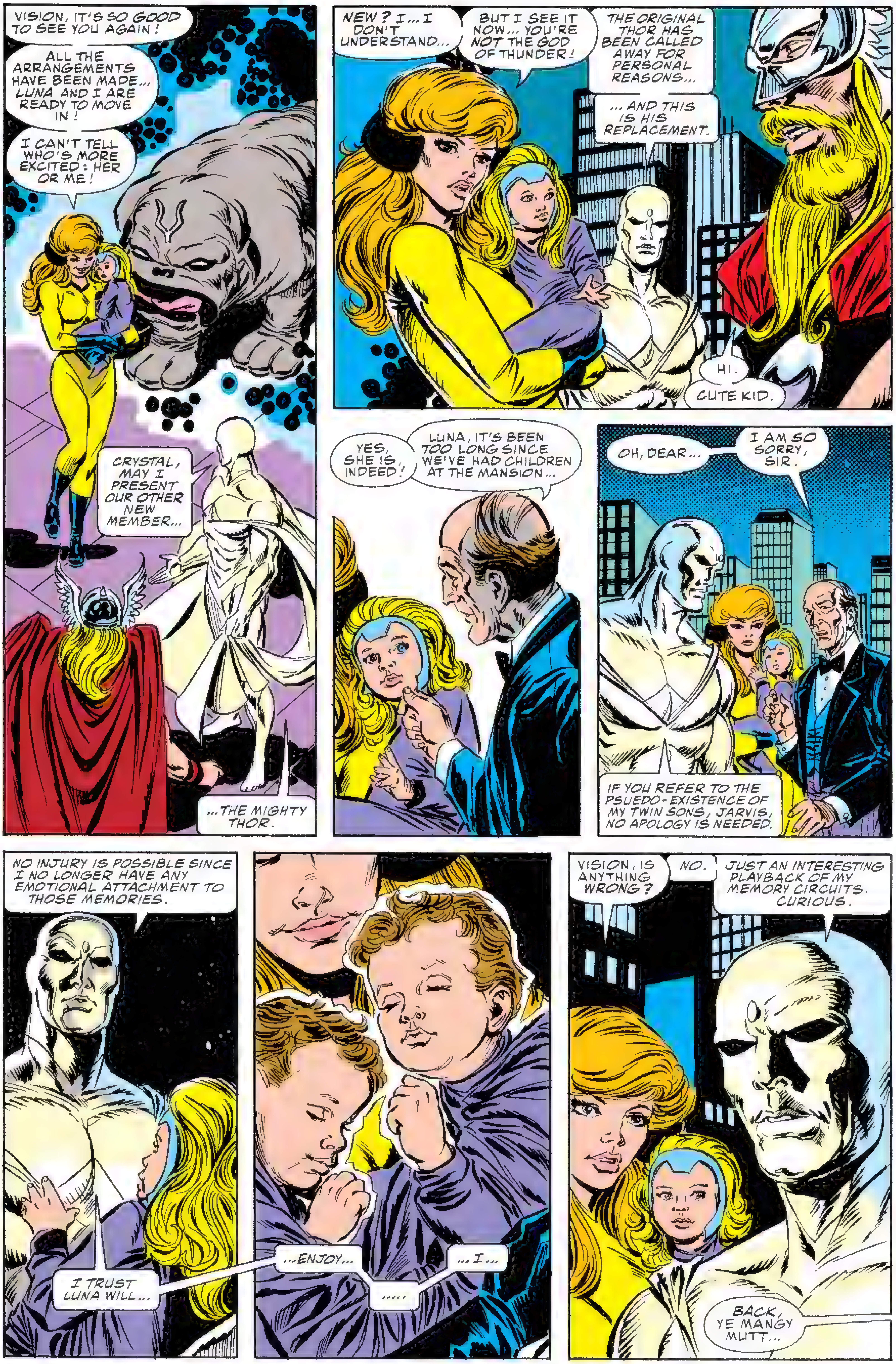
MARVEL COMICS
AVENGERS
© 1991 MARVEL ENT. GROUP INC.
TM
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN/UK 65p
343
JAN
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IT CAN'T BE!
NOT YOU!
Y-YOU'RE DEAD! DEAD!

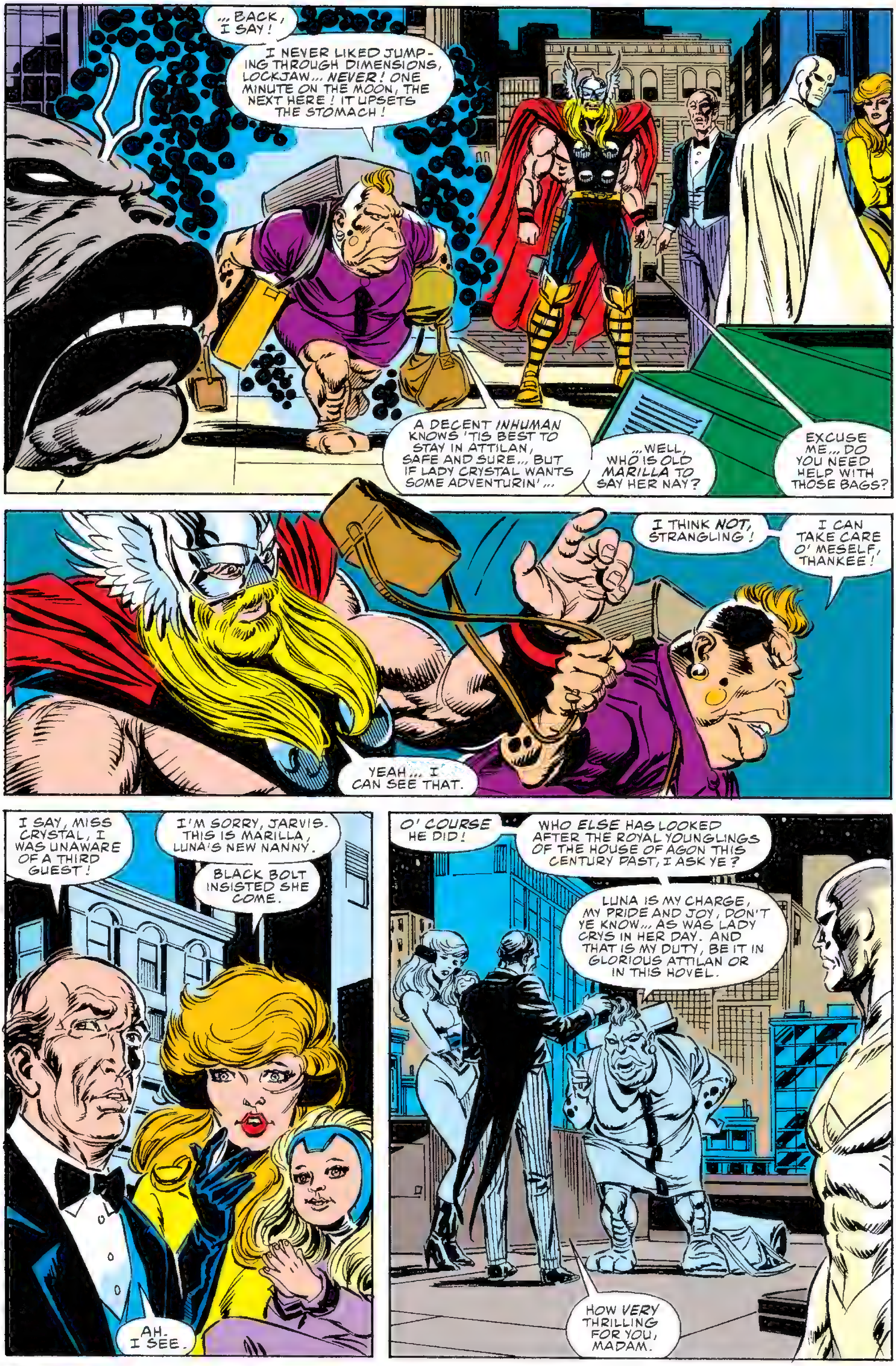

THE ROOFTOP OF AVENGERS MANSION, LATE EVENING...
HAVE ALL THE ACCOMODATIONS BEEN PREPARED, JARVIS?
INDEED, MASTER VISION...
EVERYTHING'S BEEN DUSTED, WAXED AND SHINED. I'VE ORDERED ROSES FOR THE ROOMS. FRESH LINENS HAVE JUST BEEN DE--
YAWN
AHEM
I APOLOGIZE IF MY DOMESTIC ITINERARY BORED YOU, MASTER... THOR.
OOPS.
SORRY 'BOUT THAT. I DIDN'T GET A LOT OF SLEEP LAST NIGHT.
I'M REALLY VERY INTERESTED ABOUT THE LINENS...
REALLY.
QUITE.
Y'KNOW, JARV... IF IT'S GETTING LATE FOR YOU, THE VIZH AND I CAN HANDLE THINGS IF YOU WANT.
I HAVE GREETED EVERY NEW MEMBER OF THE AVENGERS DURING MY TENURE HERE...
...I SEE NO REASON TO CHANGE CUSTOMS NOW.
NO, OF COURSE NOT.
I JUST THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE TIRED AND--
OH, FORGET IT.
BEHOLD, AVENGER.
OUR NEWEST MEMBER ARRIVES...

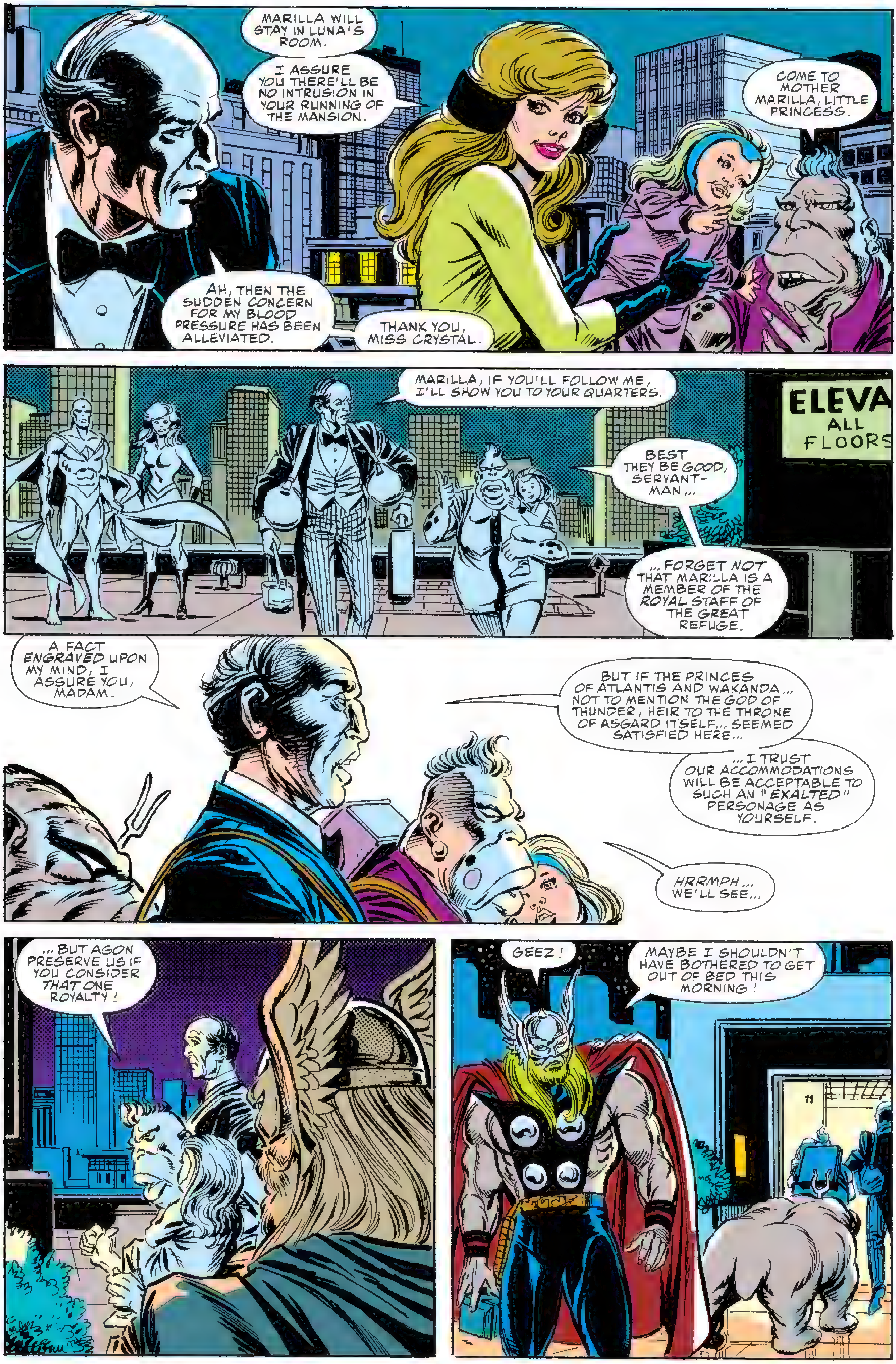
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

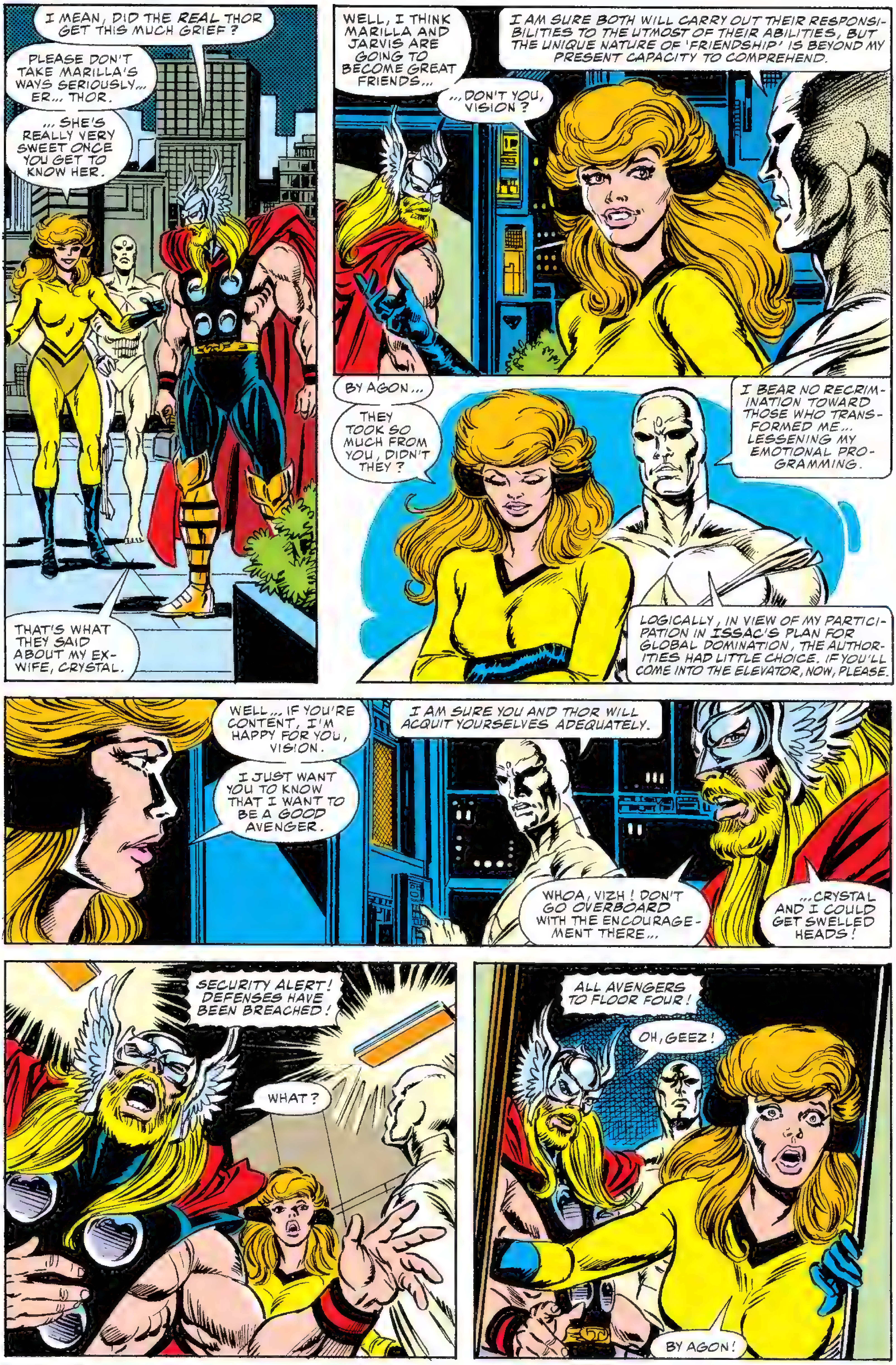

FIRST NIGHT
...THE ELEMENTAL CALLED CRYSTAL.
WOW!
WHOEVER SHE IS, THIS LADY SURE KNOWS HOW TO MAKE AN ENTRANCE!

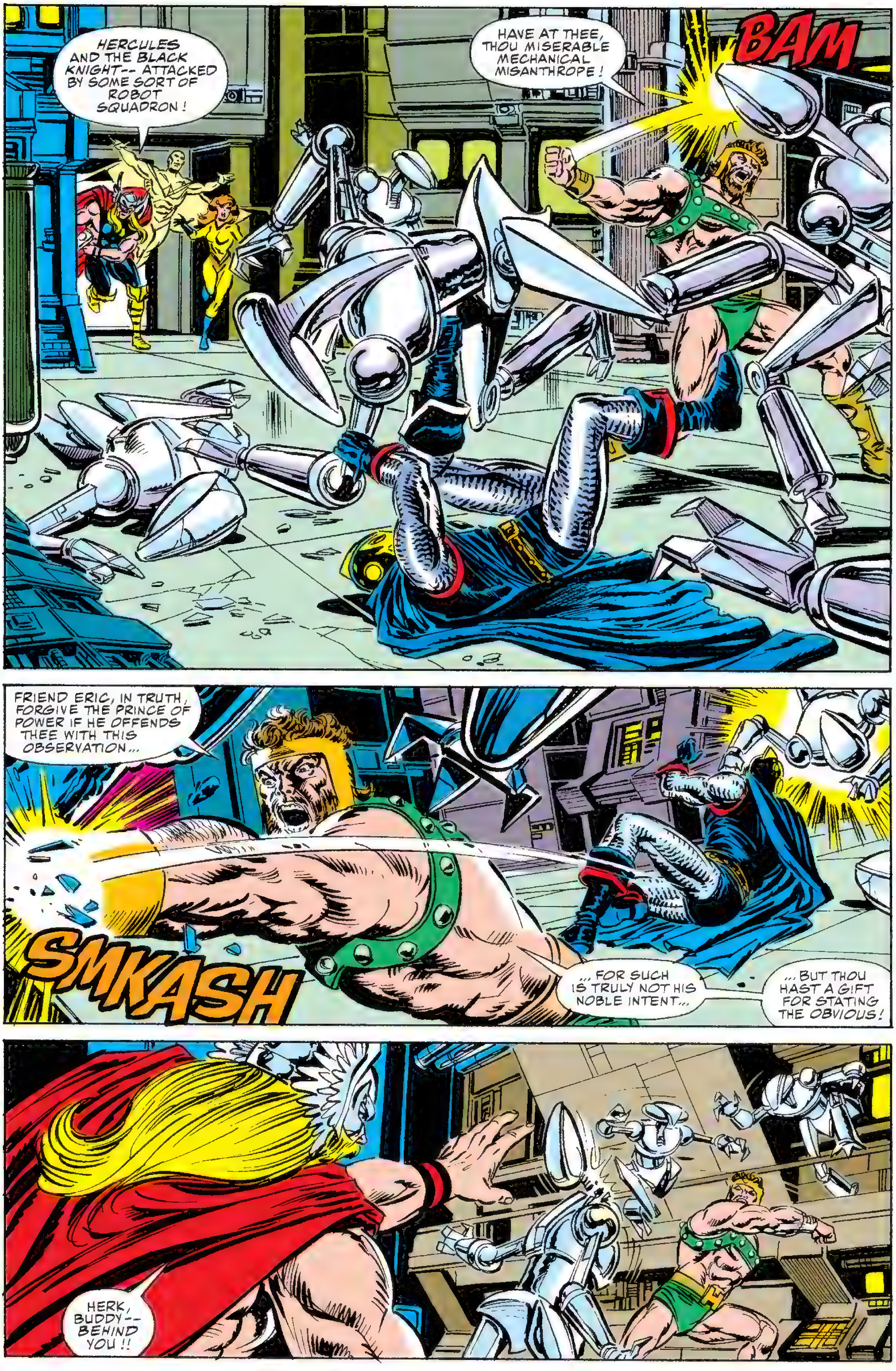
A story of acquaintances, old and new, brought to you by...
BOB HARRAS writer / STEVEN EPTING penciler / TOM PALMER inker / TOM PALMER colorist / BILL OAKLEY letterer / RALPH MACCHIO editor / TOM DeFALCO editor in chief

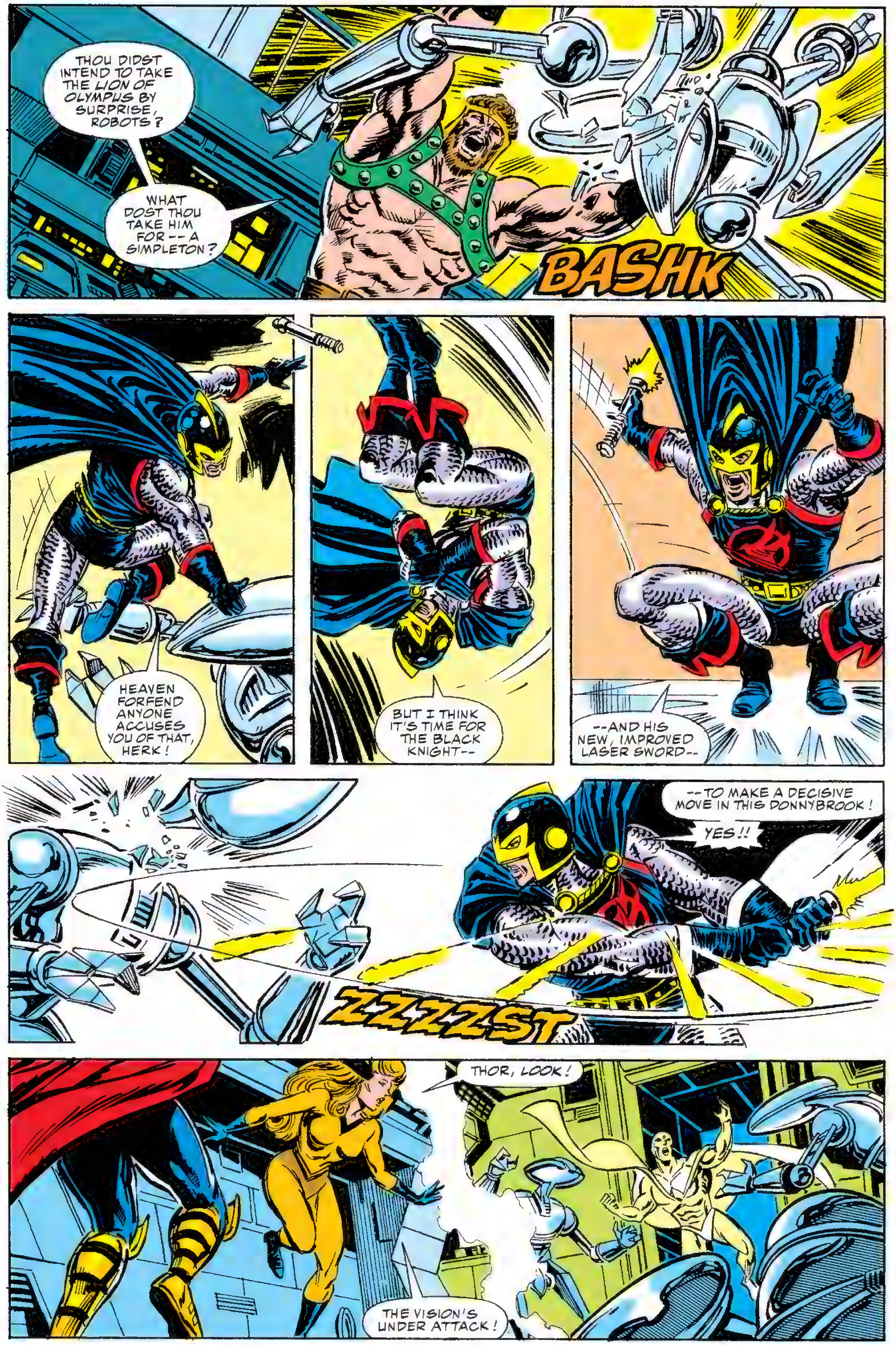

VISION, IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE... LUNA AND I ARE READY TO MOVE IN!
I CAN'T TELL WHO'S MORE EXCITED: HER OR ME!
CRYSTAL, MAY I PRESENT OUR OTHER NEW MEMBER...
...THE MIGHTY THOR.
NEW? I... I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
BUT I SEE IT NOW... YOU'RE NOT THE GOD OF THUNDER!
THE ORIGINAL THOR HAS BEEN CALLED AWAY FOR PERSONAL REASONS...
...AND THIS IS HIS REPLACEMENT.
HI.
CUTE KID.
YES, SHE IS, INDEED!
LUNA, IT'S BEEN TOO LONG SINCE WE'VE HAD CHILDREN AT THE MANSION...
OH, DEAR...
I AM SO SORRY, SIR.
IF YOU REFER TO THE PSUEDO-EXISTENCE OF MY TWIN SONS, JARVIS, NO APOLOGY IS NEEDED.
NO INJURY IS POSSIBLE SINCE I NO LONGER HAVE ANY EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT TO THOSE MEMORIES.
I TRUST LUNA WILL...
...ENJOY...
.....
...I...
VISION, IS ANYTHING WRONG?
NO.
JUST AN INTERESTING PLAYBACK OF MY MEMORY CIRCUITS. CURIOUS.
BACK, YE MANGY MUTT...

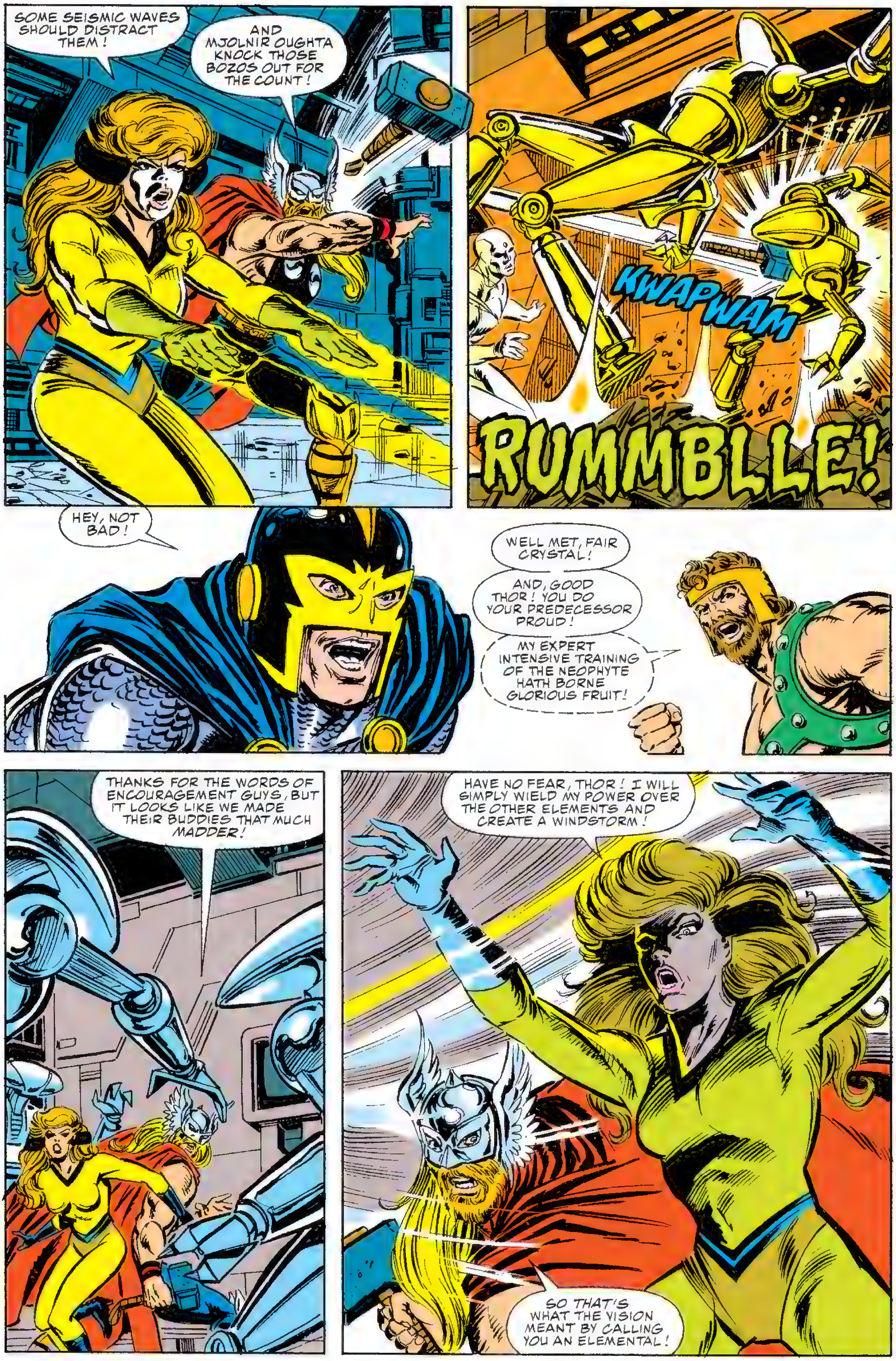

...BACK, I SAY!
I NEVER LIKED JUMPING THROUGH DIMENSIONS, LOCKJAW... *NEVER!* ONE MINUTE ON THE MOON, THE NEXT HERE! IT UPSETS THE STOMACH!
A DECENT *INHUMAN* KNOWS 'TIS BEST TO STAY IN ATTILAN, SAFE AND SURE... BUT IF LADY CRYSTAL WANTS SOME ADVENTURIN'...
...WELL, WHO IS OLD *MARILLA* TO SAY HER NAY?
EXCUSE ME... DO YOU NEED HELP WITH THOSE BAGS?
I THINK *NOT,* STRANGLING!
I CAN TAKE CARE O' MESELF, THANKEE!
YEAH... I CAN SEE THAT.
I SAY, MISS CRYSTAL, I WAS UNAWARE OF A THIRD GUEST!
I'M SORRY, JARVIS. THIS IS MARILLA, LUNA'S NEW NANNY.
BLACK BOLT INSISTED SHE COME.
AH. I SEE.
O' COURSE HE DID!
WHO *ELSE* HAS LOOKED AFTER THE ROYAL YOUNGLINGS OF THE HOUSE OF AGON THIS CENTURY PAST, I ASK YE?
LUNA IS MY CHARGE, MY PRIDE AND JOY, DON'T YE KNOW... AS WAS LADY CRYS IN HER DAY. AND THAT IS MY DUTY, BE IT IN GLORIOUS ATTILAN OR IN THIS HOVEL.
HOW *VERY* THRILLING FOR YOU, MADAM.

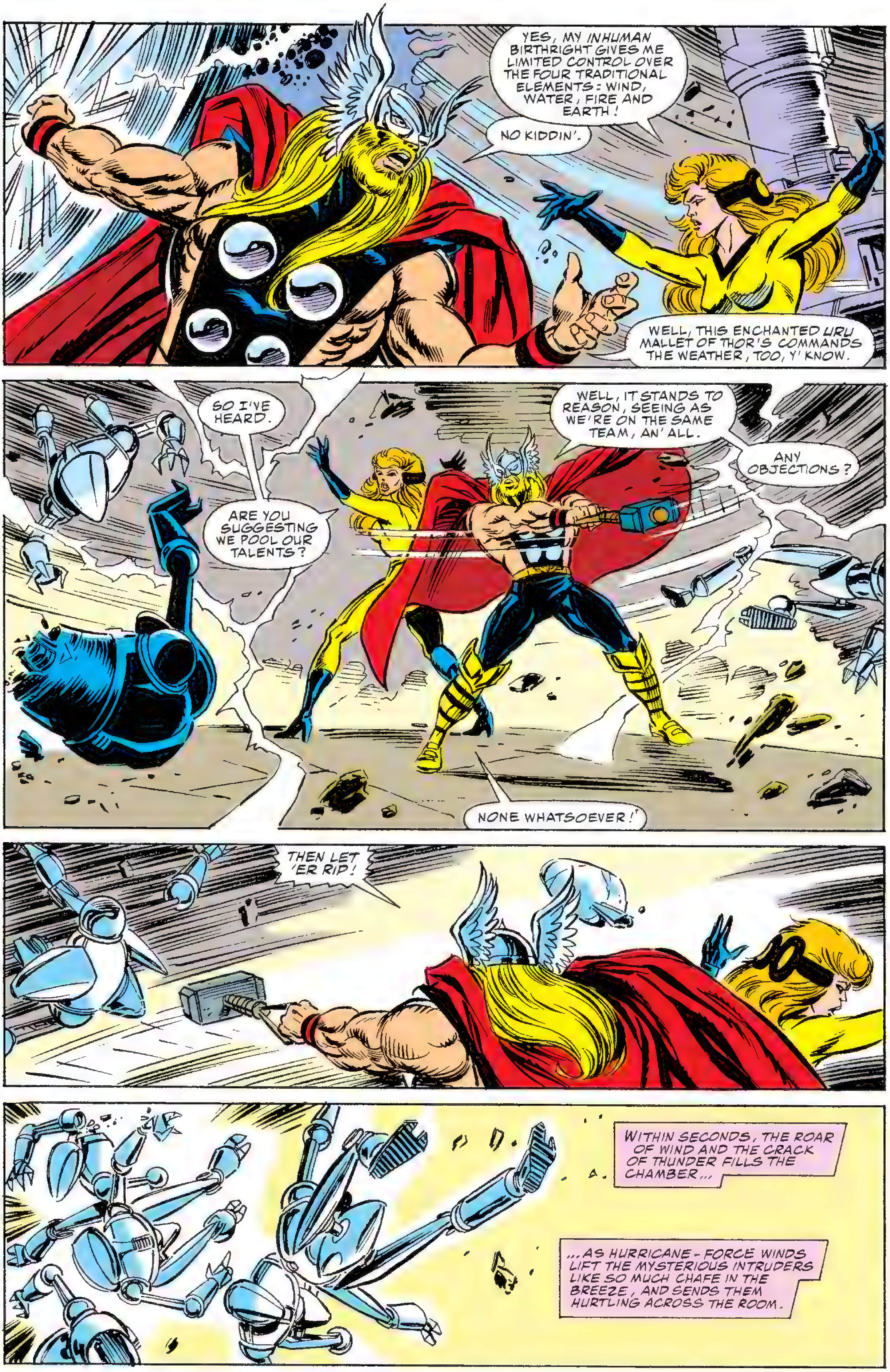

MARILLA WILL STAY IN LUNA'S ROOM.
I ASSURE YOU THERE'LL BE NO INTRUSION IN YOUR RUNNING OF THE MANSION.
COME TO MOTHER MARILLA, LITTLE PRINCESS.
AH, THEN THE SUDDEN CONCERN FOR MY BLOOD PRESSURE HAS BEEN ALLEVIATED.
THANK YOU, MISS CRYSTAL.
MARILLA, IF YOU'LL FOLLOW ME, I'LL SHOW YOU TO YOUR QUARTERS.
ELEVA
ALL FLOORS
BEST THEY BE GOOD, SERVANT-MAN...
...FORGET NOT THAT MARILLA IS A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL STAFF OF THE GREAT REFUGE.
A FACT ENGRAVED UPON MY MIND, I ASSURE YOU, MADAM.
BUT IF THE PRINCES OF ATLANTIS AND WAKANDA... NOT TO MENTION THE GOD OF THUNDER, HEIR TO THE THRONE OF ASGARD ITSELF... SEEMED SATISFIED HERE...
...I TRUST OUR ACCOMMODATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO SUCH AN "EXALTED" PERSONAGE AS YOURSELF.
HRRMPH... WE'LL SEE...
...BUT AGON PRESERVE US IF YOU CONSIDER THAT ONE ROYALTY!
GEEZ!
MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE BOTHERED TO GET OUT OF BED THIS MORNING!


I MEAN, DID THE REAL THOR GET THIS MUCH GRIEF?
PLEASE DON'T TAKE MARILLA'S WAYS SERIOUSLY... ER... THOR.
...SHE'S REALLY VERY SWEET ONCE YOU GET TO KNOW HER.
THAT'S WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT MY EX-WIFE, CRYSTAL.
WELL, I THINK MARILLA AND JARVIS ARE GOING TO BECOME GREAT FRIENDS...
...DON'T YOU, VISION?
I AM SURE BOTH WILL CARRY OUT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE UTMOST OF THEIR ABILITIES, BUT THE UNIQUE NATURE OF 'FRIENDSHIP' IS BEYOND MY PRESENT CAPACITY TO COMPREHEND.
BY AGON...
THEY TOOK SO MUCH FROM YOU, DIDN'T THEY?
I BEAR NO RECRIMINATION TOWARD THOSE WHO TRANSFORMED ME... LESSENING MY EMOTIONAL PROGRAMMING.
LOGICALLY, IN VIEW OF MY PARTICIPATION IN ISSAC'S PLAN FOR GLOBAL DOMINATION, THE AUTHORITIES HAD LITTLE CHOICE. IF YOU'LL COME INTO THE ELEVATOR, NOW, PLEASE.
WELL... IF YOU'RE CONTENT, I'M HAPPY FOR YOU, VISION.
I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I WANT TO BE A GOOD AVENGER.
I AM SURE YOU AND THOR WILL ACQUIT YOURSELVES ADEQUATELY.
WHOA, VIZH! DON'T GO OVERBOARD WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT THERE...
...CRYSTAL AND I COULD GET SWELLED HEADS!
SECURITY ALERT! DEFENSES HAVE BEEN BREACHED!
WHAT?
ALL AVENGERS TO FLOOR FOUR!
OH, GEEZ!
BY AGON!

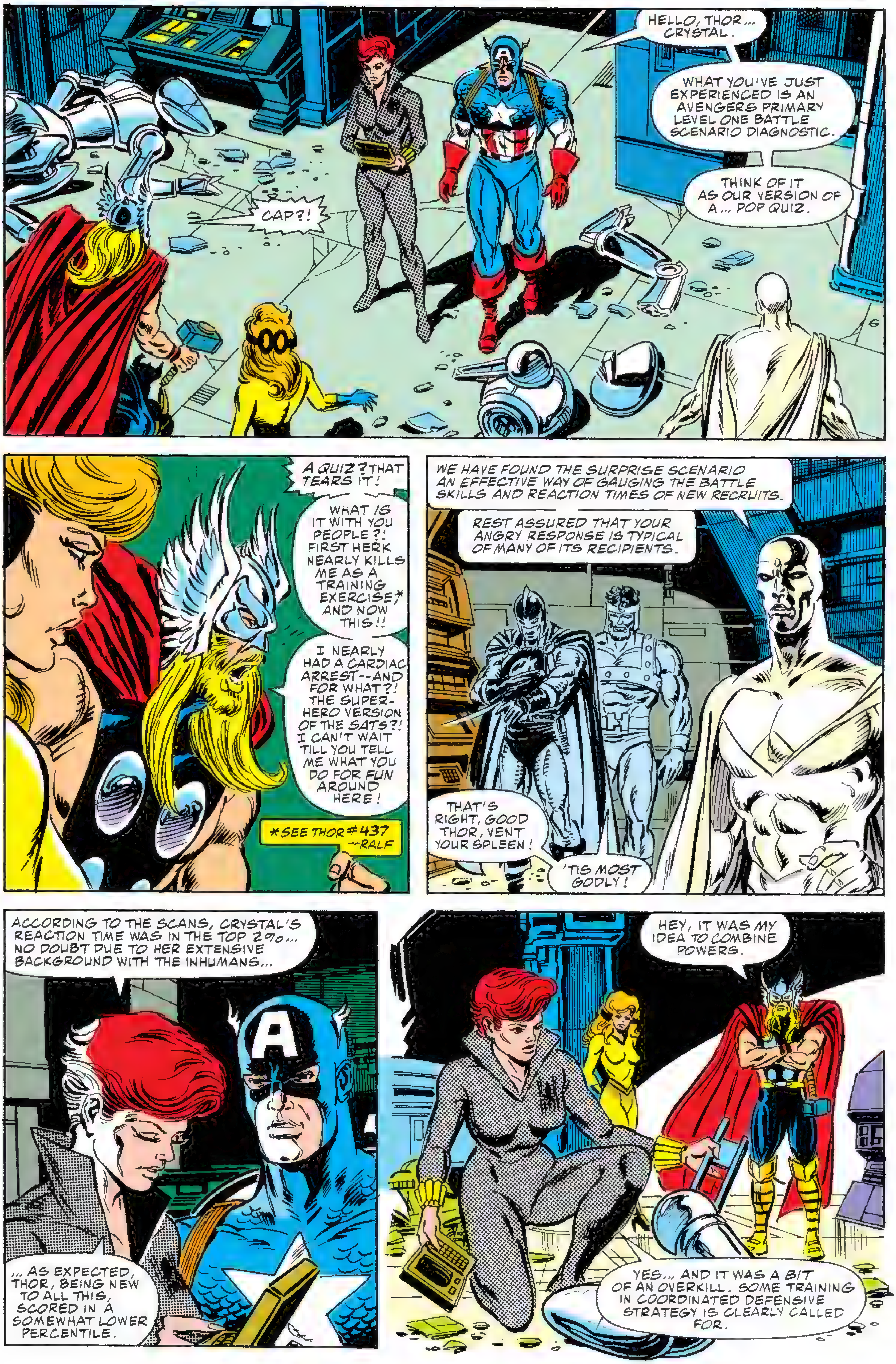

HERCULES AND THE BLACK KNIGHT-- ATTACKED BY SOME SORT OF ROBOT SQUADRON!
HAVE AT THEE, THOU MISERABLE MECHANICAL MISANTHROPE!
BAM
FRIEND ERIC, IN TRUTH, FORGIVE THE PRINCE OF POWER IF HE OFFENDS THEE WITH THIS OBSERVATION...
SMKASH
...FOR SUCH IS TRULY NOT HIS NOBLE INTENT...
...BUT THOU HAST A GIFT FOR STATING THE OBVIOUS!
HERK, BUDDY-- BEHIND YOU!!

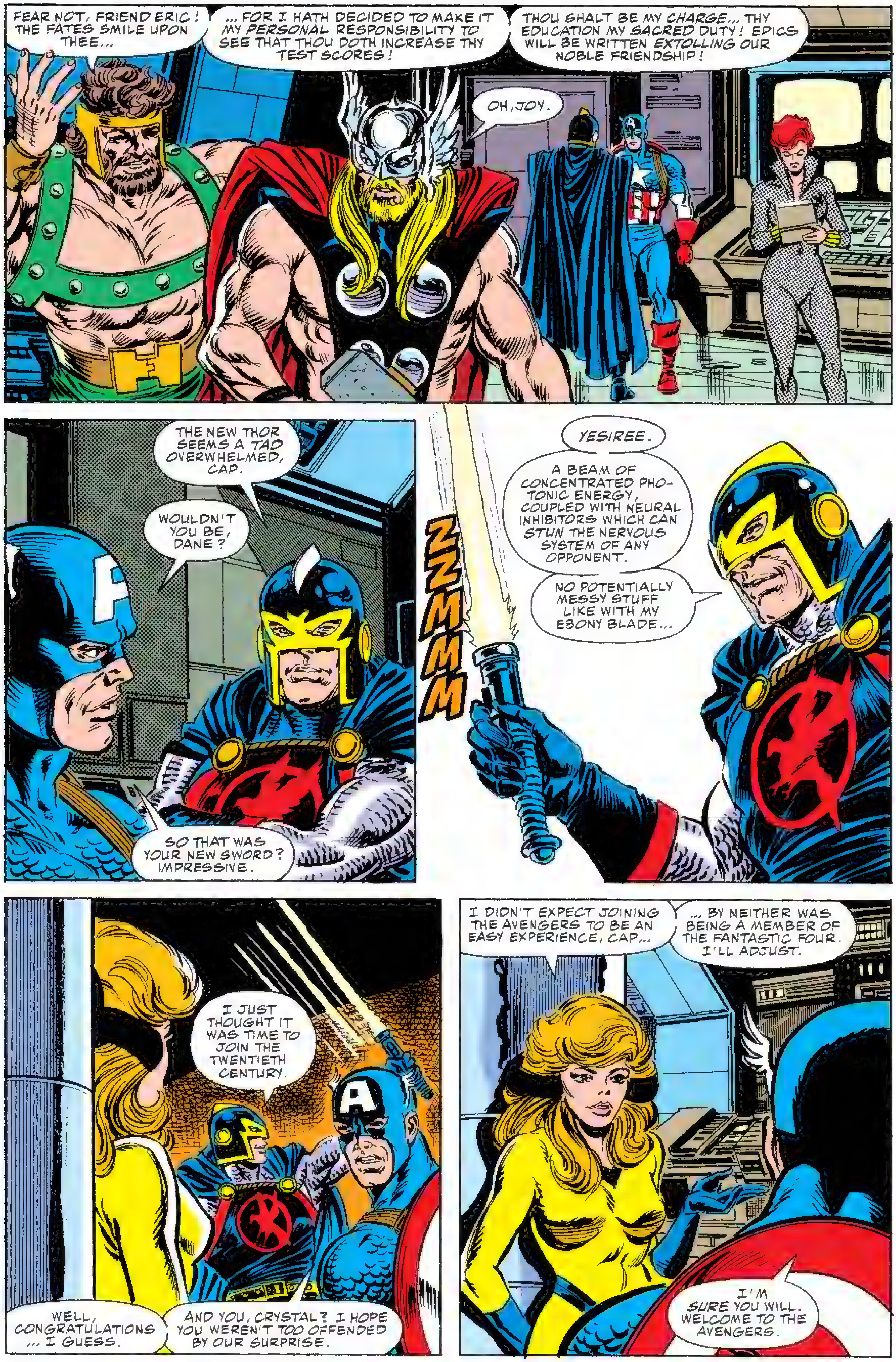

THOU DIDST INTEND TO TAKE THE *LION OF OLYMPUS* BY SURPRISE, ROBOTS?
WHAT DOST THOU TAKE HIM FOR -- A SIMPLETON?
BASHK
HEAVEN FORFEND ANYONE ACCUSES YOU OF THAT, HERK!
BUT I THINK IT'S TIME FOR THE BLACK KNIGHT--
--AND HIS NEW, IMPROVED LASER SWORD--
--TO MAKE A DECISIVE MOVE IN THIS DONNYBROOK!
YES!!
ZZZZST
THOR, LOOK!
THE VISION'S UNDER ATTACK!

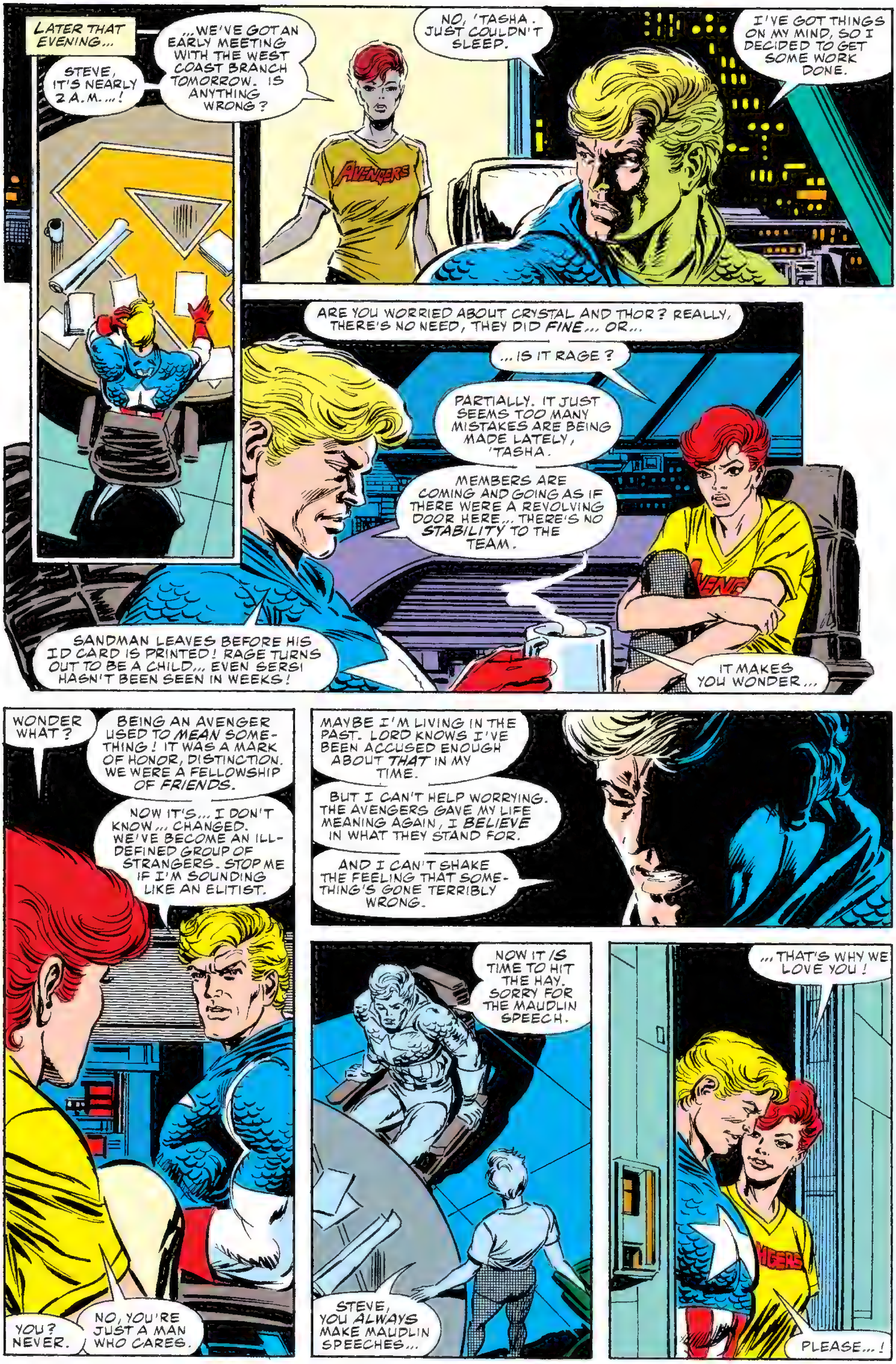

SOME SEISMIC WAVES SHOULD DISTRACT THEM!
AND MJOLNIR OUGHTA KNOCK THOSE BOZOS OUT FOR THE COUNT!
KWAPWAM
RUMMBLLE!
HEY, NOT BAD!
WELL MET, FAIR CRYSTAL!
AND, GOOD THOR! YOU DO YOUR PREDECESSOR PROUD!
MY EXPERT INTENSIVE TRAINING OF THE NEOPHYTE HATH BORNE GLORIOUS FRUIT!
THANKS FOR THE WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT GUYS, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE MADE THEIR BUDDIES THAT MUCH MADDER!
HAVE NO FEAR, THOR! I WILL SIMPLY WIELD MY POWER OVER THE OTHER ELEMENTS AND CREATE A WINDSTORM!
SO THAT'S WHAT THE VISION MEANT BY CALLING YOU AN ELEMENTAL!

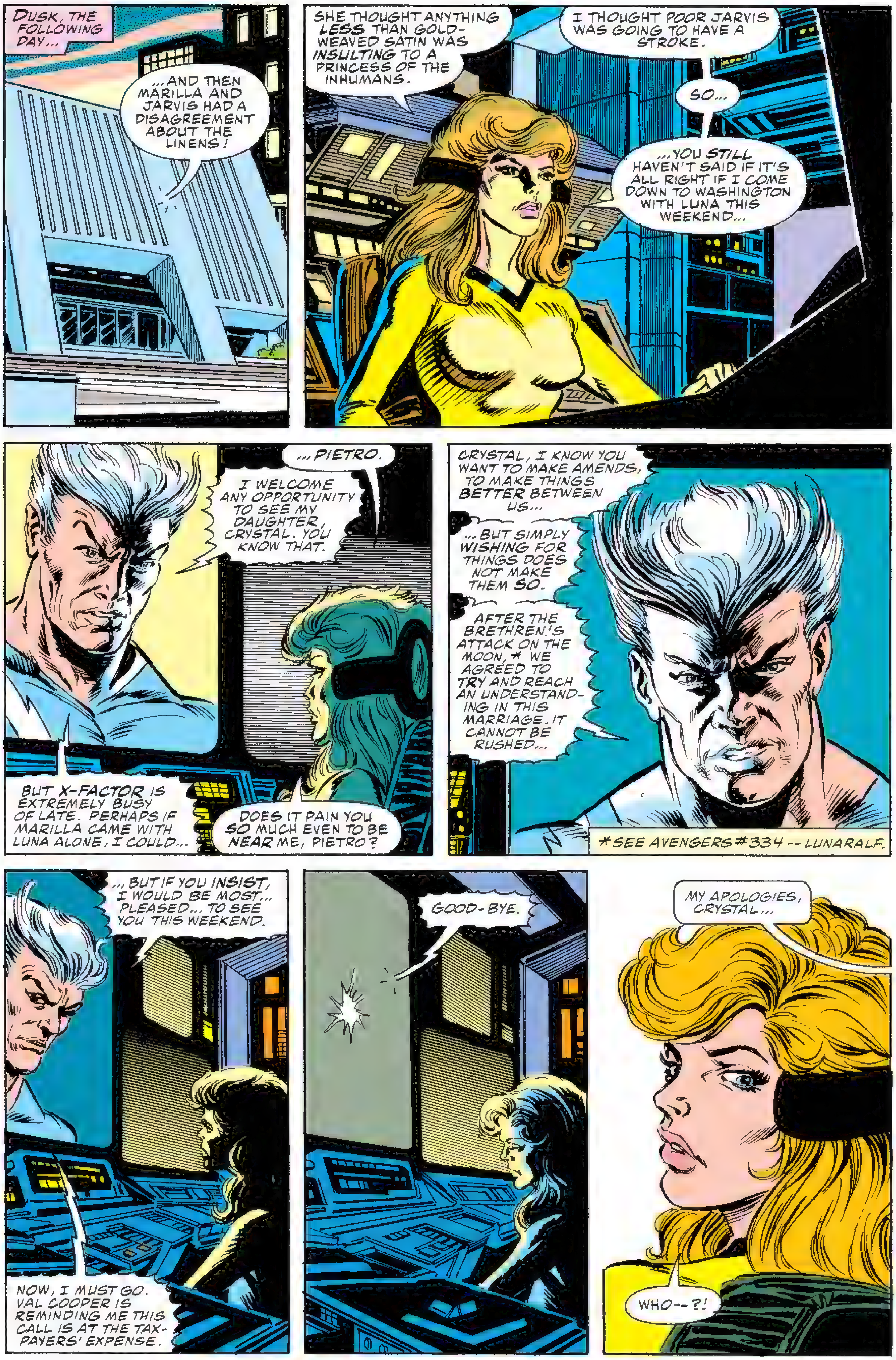

YES, MY INHUMAN BIRTHRIGHT GIVES ME LIMITED CONTROL OVER THE FOUR TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS: WIND, WATER, FIRE AND EARTH!
NO KIDDIN'.
WELL, THIS ENCHANTED URU MALLET OF THOR'S COMMANDS THE WEATHER, TOO, Y' KNOW.
SO I'VE HEARD.
ARE YOU SUGGESTING WE POOL OUR TALENTS?
WELL, IT STANDS TO REASON, SEEING AS WE'RE ON THE SAME TEAM, AN' ALL.
ANY OBJECTIONS?
NONE WHATSOEVER!
THEN LET 'ER RIP!
WITHIN SECONDS, THE ROAR OF WIND AND THE CRACK OF THUNDER FILLS THE CHAMBER...
...AS HURRICANE-FORCE WINDS LIFT THE MYSTERIOUS INTRUDERS LIKE SO MUCH CHAFE IN THE BREEZE, AND SENDS THEM HURTLING ACROSS THE ROOM.

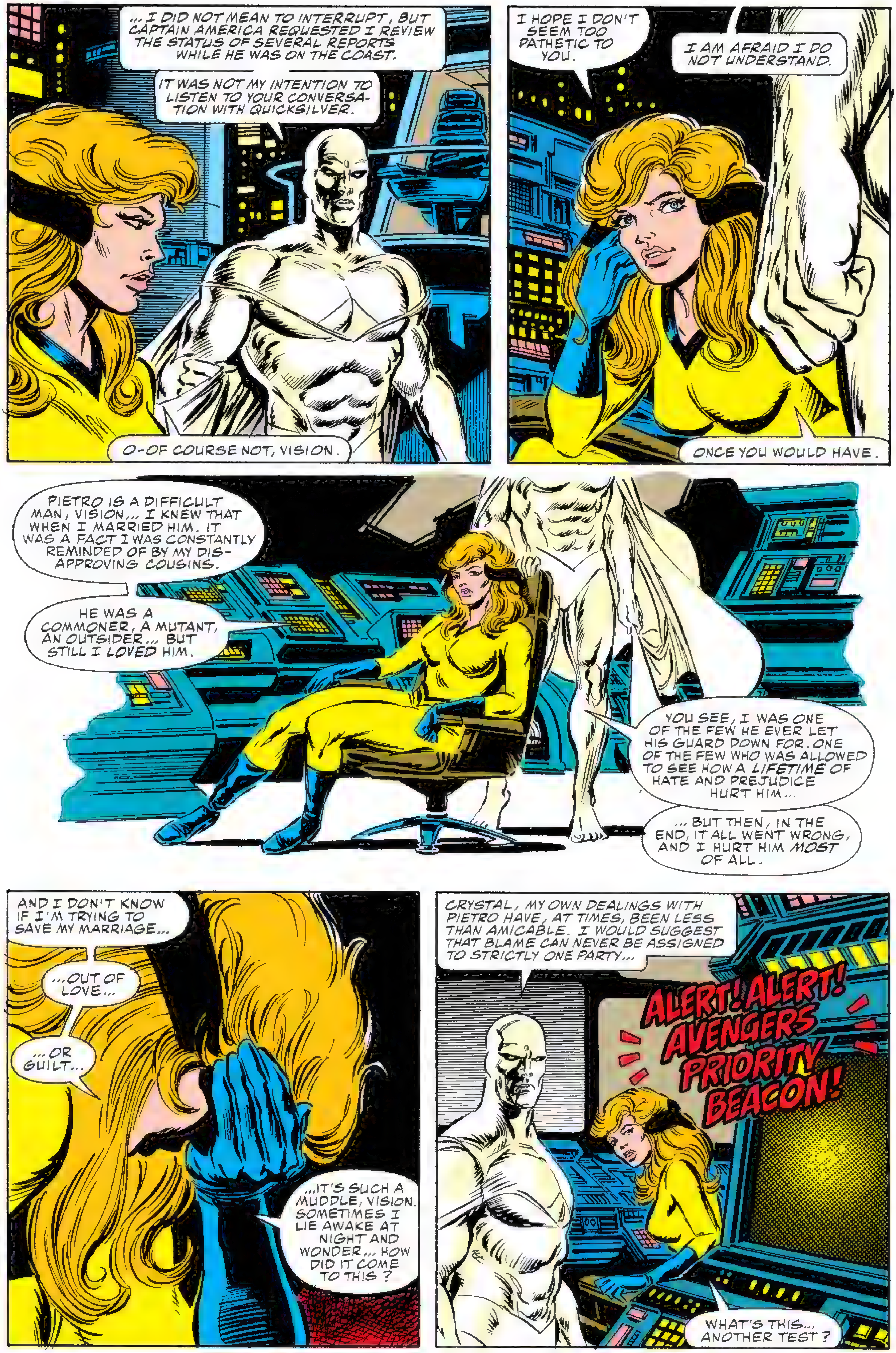
...UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S NOT ONLY THE ANDROIDS WHO ARE AFFECTED...
VERILY, I ...DOTH... PROTEST!
FOR... THE PRINCE OF POWER ...TO BE AIRBORNE SO... IS MOST... UNSEEMLY!
HEY... YOU'RE NOT... THE ONLY ONE, BIG GUY!
THESE WINDS... CRYSTAL AND THOR... WHIPPED UP ARE... INCREDIBLE!
REMAIN CALM, MY FELLOW AVENGERS.
I HAVE INCREASED MY DENSITY SUFFICIENTLY SO THAT I AM ANCHORED TO THE FLOOR.
BLESS YOU, VISION!
AYE... FOR ANY PORT IN THE STORM DOTH OFFER SAFE... IF EMBARRASSING... HAVEN.
VIZH, DON'T YOU THINK WE CAN CALL THIS OFF NOW?
YES. I DEEM THIS AN APPROPRIATE POINT TO END THIS PROGRAM. DO YOU AGREE, CAPTAIN AMERICA?
AGREED, VISION. TERMINATE BATTLE SIMULATION.
SIMULATION?!

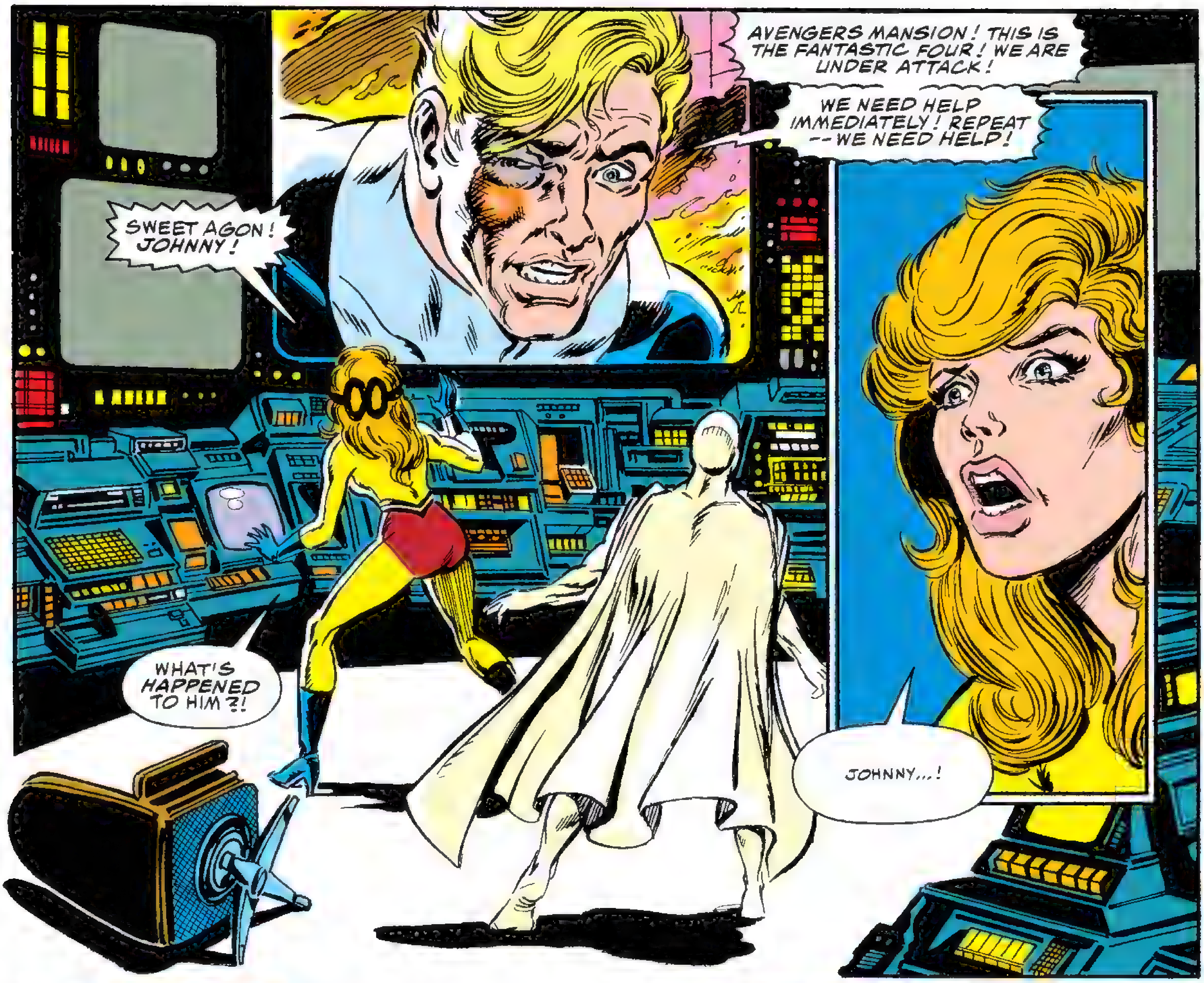

HELLO, THOR... CRYSTAL.
WHAT YOU'VE JUST EXPERIENCED IS AN AVENGERS PRIMARY LEVEL ONE BATTLE SCENARIO DIAGNOSTIC.
THINK OF IT AS OUR VERSION OF A... POP QUIZ.
CAP?!
A QUIZ? THAT TEARS IT!
WHAT IS IT WITH YOU PEOPLE?! FIRST HERK NEARLY KILLS ME AS A TRAINING EXERCISE* AND NOW THIS!!
I NEARLY HAD A CARDIAC ARREST--AND FOR WHAT?! THE SUPER-HERO VERSION OF THE SATS?! I CAN'T WAIT TILL YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU DO FOR FUN AROUND HERE!
*SEE THOR #437 --RALF
WE HAVE FOUND THE SURPRISE SCENARIO AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF GAUGING THE BATTLE SKILLS AND REACTION TIMES OF NEW RECRUITS.
REST ASSURED THAT YOUR ANGRY RESPONSE IS TYPICAL OF MANY OF ITS RECIPIENTS.
THAT'S RIGHT, GOOD THOR, VENT YOUR SPLEEN!
'TIS MOST GODLY!
ACCORDING TO THE SCANS, CRYSTAL'S REACTION TIME WAS IN THE TOP 2%... NO DOUBT DUE TO HER EXTENSIVE BACKGROUND WITH THE INHUMANS...
...AS EXPECTED, THOR, BEING NEW TO ALL THIS, SCORED IN A SOMEWHAT LOWER PERCENTILE.
HEY, IT WAS MY IDEA TO COMBINE POWERS.
YES... AND IT WAS A BIT OF AN OVERKILL. SOME TRAINING IN COORDINATED DEFENSIVE STRATEGY IS CLEARLY CALLED FOR.

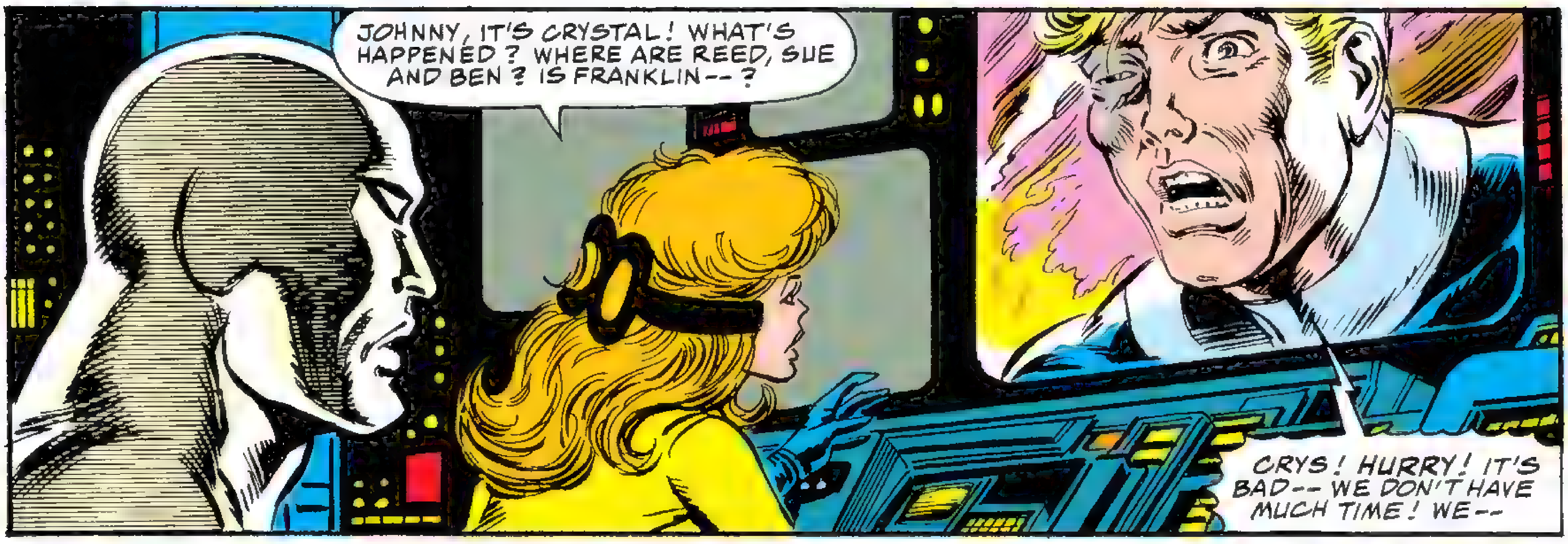

FEAR NOT, FRIEND ERIC! THE FATES SMILE UPON THEE...
...FOR I HATH DECIDED TO MAKE IT MY PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO SEE THAT THOU DOTH INCREASE THY TEST SCORES!
THOU SHALT BE MY CHARGE... THY EDUCATION MY SACRED DUTY! EPICS WILL BE WRITTEN EXTOLLING OUR NOBLE FRIENDSHIP!
OH, JOY.
THE NEW THOR SEEMS A TAD OVERWHELMED, CAP.
WOULDN'T YOU BE, DANE?
SO THAT WAS YOUR NEW SWORD? IMPRESSIVE.
ZZMMM
YESIREE.
A BEAM OF CONCENTRATED PHOTONIC ENERGY, COUPLED WITH NEURAL INHIBITORS WHICH CAN STUN THE NERVOUS SYSTEM OF ANY OPPONENT.
NO POTENTIALLY MESSY STUFF LIKE WITH MY EBONY BLADE...
I JUST THOUGHT IT WAS TIME TO JOIN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.
WELL, CONGRATULATIONS ...I GUESS.
AND YOU, CRYSTAL? I HOPE YOU WEREN'T TOO OFFENDED BY OUR SURPRISE.
I DIDN'T EXPECT JOINING THE AVENGERS TO BE AN EASY EXPERIENCE, CAP...
...BY NEITHER WAS BEING A MEMBER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR. I'LL ADJUST.
I'M SURE YOU WILL. WELCOME TO THE AVENGERS.

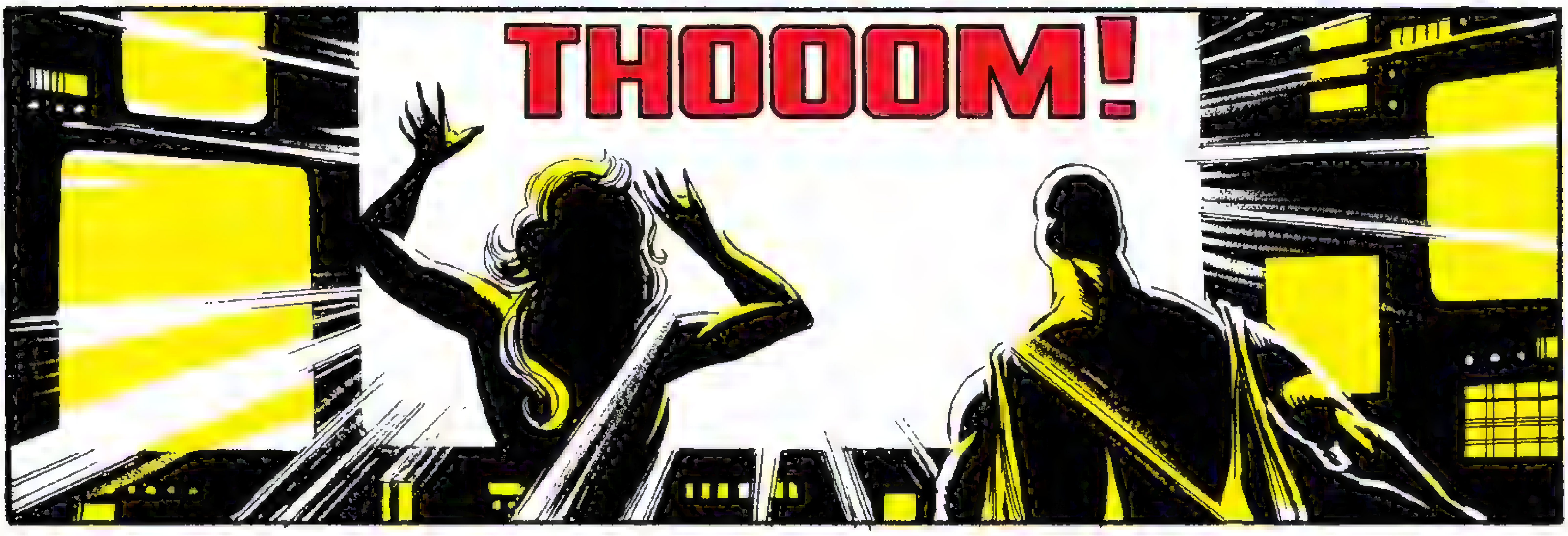

LATER THAT EVENING...
STEVE, IT'S NEARLY 2 A.M....!
...WE'VE GOT AN EARLY MEETING WITH THE WEST COAST BRANCH TOMORROW. IS ANYTHING WRONG?
NO, 'TASHA. JUST COULDN'T SLEEP.
I'VE GOT THINGS ON MY MIND, SO I DECIDED TO GET SOME WORK DONE.
AVENGERS
ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT CRYSTAL AND THOR? REALLY, THERE'S NO NEED, THEY DID *FINE*... OR...
...IS IT RAGE?
PARTIALLY. IT JUST SEEMS TOO MANY MISTAKES ARE BEING MADE LATELY, 'TASHA.
MEMBERS ARE COMING AND GOING AS IF THERE WERE A REVOLVING DOOR HERE... THERE'S NO *STABILITY* TO THE TEAM.
SANDMAN LEAVES BEFORE HIS ID CARD IS PRINTED! RAGE TURNS OUT TO BE A CHILD... EVEN SERSI HASN'T BEEN SEEN IN WEEKS!
IT MAKES YOU WONDER...
WONDER WHAT?
BEING AN AVENGER USED TO *MEAN* SOMETHING! IT WAS A MARK OF HONOR, DISTINCTION. WE WERE A FELLOWSHIP OF *FRIENDS*.
NOW IT'S... I DON'T KNOW... CHANGED. WE'VE BECOME AN ILL-DEFINED GROUP OF STRANGERS. STOP ME IF I'M SOUNDING LIKE AN ELITIST.
YOU? NEVER.
NO, YOU'RE JUST A MAN WHO CARES.
MAYBE I'M LIVING IN THE PAST. LORD KNOWS I'VE BEEN ACCUSED ENOUGH ABOUT *THAT* IN MY TIME.
BUT I CAN'T HELP WORRYING. THE AVENGERS GAVE MY LIFE MEANING AGAIN, I *BELIEVE* IN WHAT THEY STAND FOR.
AND I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT SOMETHING'S GONE TERRIBLY WRONG.
NOW IT *IS* TIME TO HIT THE HAY. SORRY FOR THE MAUDLIN SPEECH.
STEVE, YOU *ALWAYS* MAKE MAUDLIN SPEECHES...
...THAT'S WHY WE LOVE YOU!
PLEASE...!

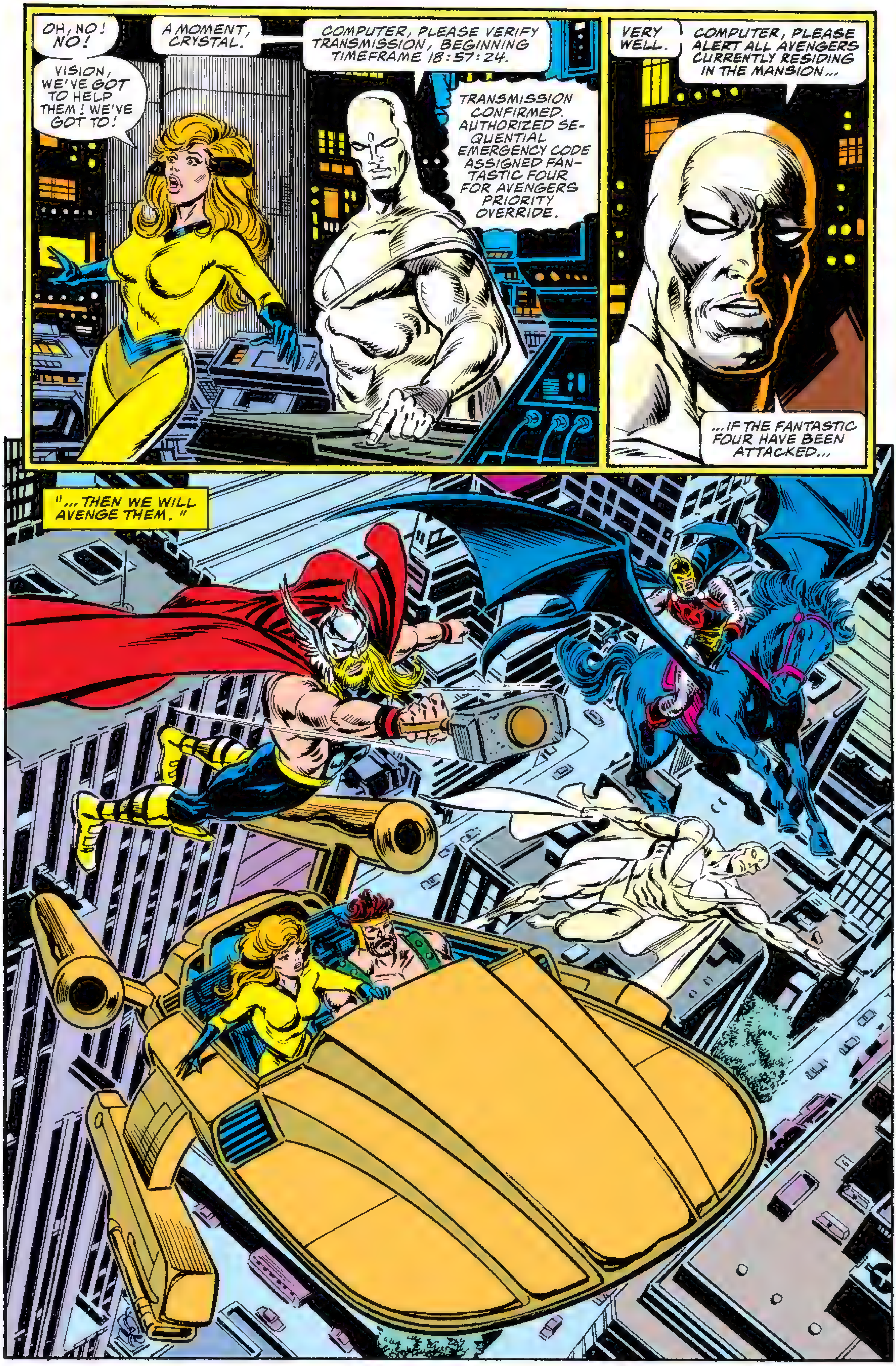

DUSK, THE FOLLOWING DAY...
...AND THEN MARILLA AND JARVIS HAD A DISAGREEMENT ABOUT THE LINENS!
SHE THOUGHT ANYTHING LESS THAN GOLD-WEAVED SATIN WAS INSULTING TO A PRINCESS OF THE INHUMANS.
I THOUGHT POOR JARVIS WAS GOING TO HAVE A STROKE.
SO...
...YOU STILL HAVEN'T SAID IF IT'S ALL RIGHT IF I COME DOWN TO WASHINGTON WITH LUNA THIS WEEKEND...
...PIETRO.
I WELCOME ANY OPPORTUNITY TO SEE MY DAUGHTER, CRYSTAL. YOU KNOW THAT.
BUT X-FACTOR IS EXTREMELY BUSY OF LATE. PERHAPS IF MARILLA CAME WITH LUNA ALONE, I COULD...
DOES IT PAIN YOU SO MUCH EVEN TO BE NEAR ME, PIETRO?
CRYSTAL, I KNOW YOU WANT TO MAKE AMENDS, TO MAKE THINGS BETTER BETWEEN US...
...BUT SIMPLY WISHING FOR THINGS DOES NOT MAKE THEM SO.
AFTER THE BRETHREN'S ATTACK ON THE MOON,* WE AGREED TO TRY AND REACH AN UNDERSTANDING IN THIS MARRIAGE. IT CANNOT BE RUSHED...
*SEE AVENGERS #334 -- LUNARALF.
...BUT IF YOU INSIST, I WOULD BE MOST... PLEASED... TO SEE YOU THIS WEEKEND.
NOW, I MUST GO. VAL COOPER IS REMINDING ME THIS CALL IS AT THE TAX-PAYERS' EXPENSE.
GOOD-BYE.
MY APOLOGIES, CRYSTAL...
WHO--?!

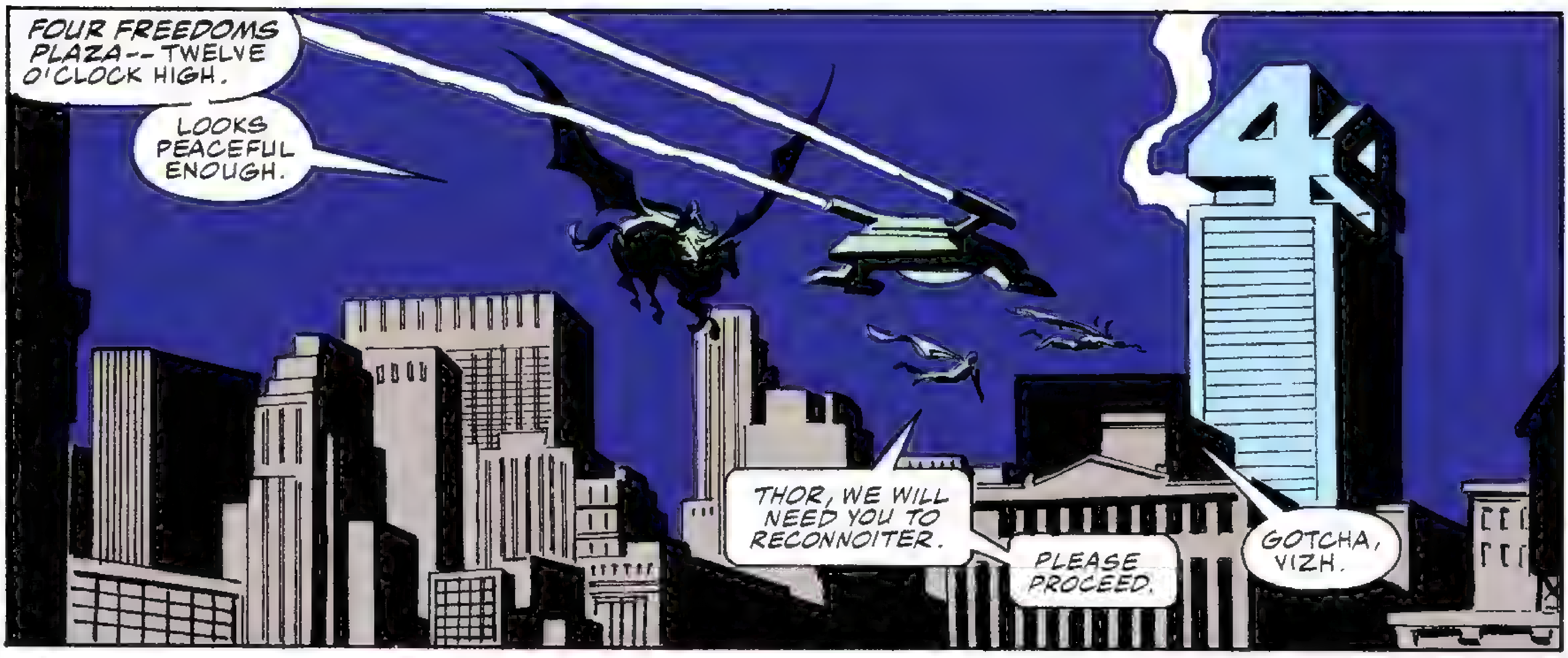

...I DID NOT MEAN TO INTERRUPT, BUT CAPTAIN AMERICA REQUESTED I REVIEW THE STATUS OF SEVERAL REPORTS WHILE HE WAS ON THE COAST.
IT WAS NOT MY INTENTION TO LISTEN TO YOUR CONVERSATION WITH QUICKSILVER.
O-OF COURSE NOT, VISION.
I HOPE I DON'T SEEM TOO PATHETIC TO YOU.
I AM AFRAID I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
ONCE YOU WOULD HAVE.
PIETRO IS A DIFFICULT MAN, VISION... I KNEW THAT WHEN I MARRIED HIM. IT WAS A FACT I WAS CONSTANTLY REMINDED OF BY MY DISAPPROVING COUSINS.
HE WAS A COMMONER, A MUTANT, AN OUTSIDER... BUT STILL I LOVED HIM.
YOU SEE, I WAS ONE OF THE FEW HE EVER LET HIS GUARD DOWN FOR. ONE OF THE FEW WHO WAS ALLOWED TO SEE HOW A LIFETIME OF HATE AND PREJUDICE HURT HIM...
...BUT THEN, IN THE END, IT ALL WENT WRONG, AND I HURT HIM MOST OF ALL.
AND I DON'T KNOW IF I'M TRYING TO SAVE MY MARRIAGE...
...OUT OF LOVE...
...OR GUILT...
...IT'S SUCH A MUDDLE, VISION. SOMETIMES I LIE AWAKE AT NIGHT AND WONDER... HOW DID IT COME TO THIS?
CRYSTAL, MY OWN DEALINGS WITH PIETRO HAVE, AT TIMES, BEEN LESS THAN AMICABLE. I WOULD SUGGEST THAT BLAME CAN NEVER BE ASSIGNED TO STRICTLY ONE PARTY...
ALERT! ALERT! AVENGERS PRIORITY BEACON!
WHAT'S THIS... ANOTHER TEST?

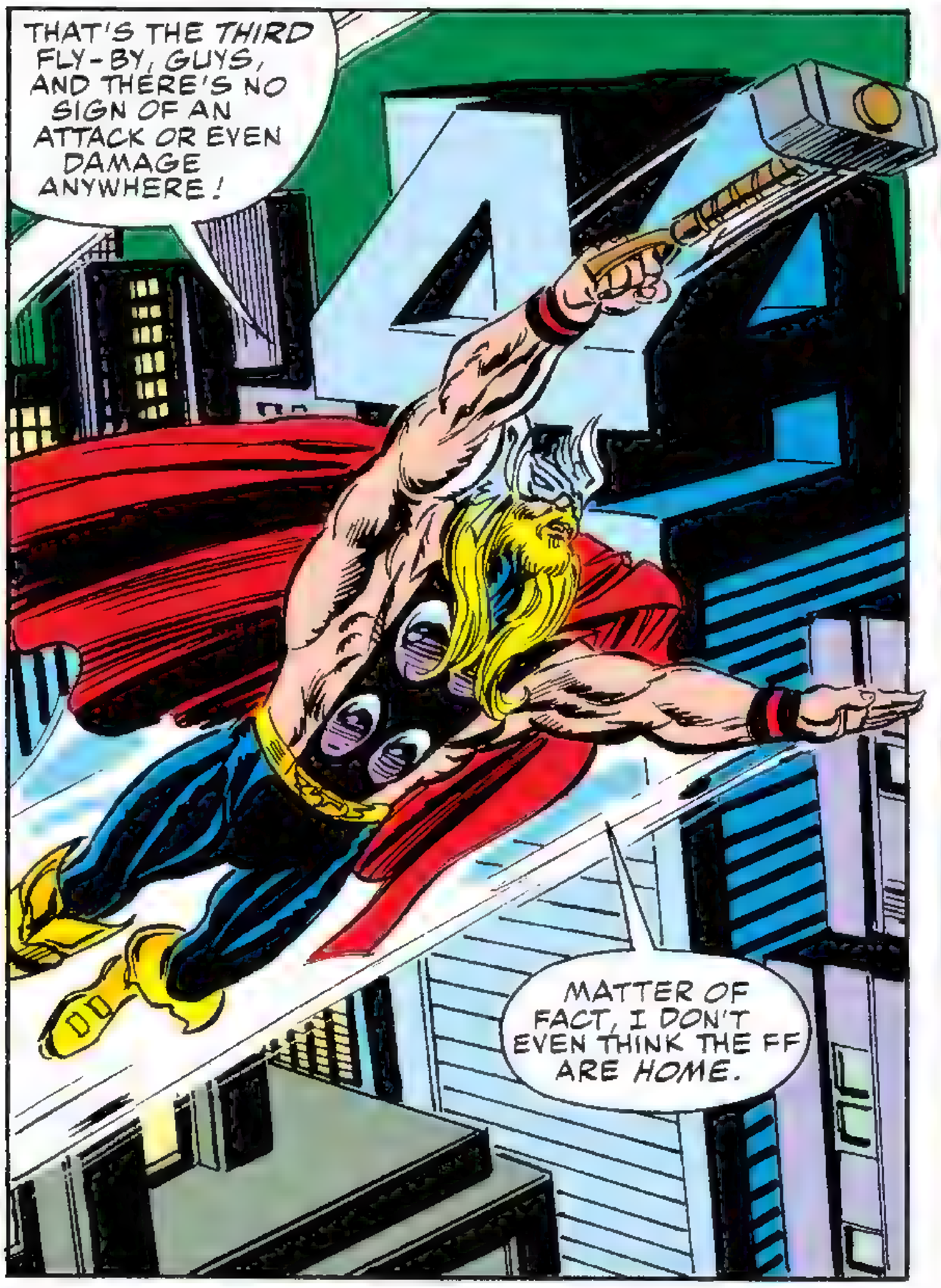

AVENGERS MANSION! THIS IS THE FANTASTIC FOUR! WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!
WE NEED HELP IMMEDIATELY! REPEAT --WE NEED HELP!
SWEET AGON! JOHNNY!
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?!
JOHNNY...!

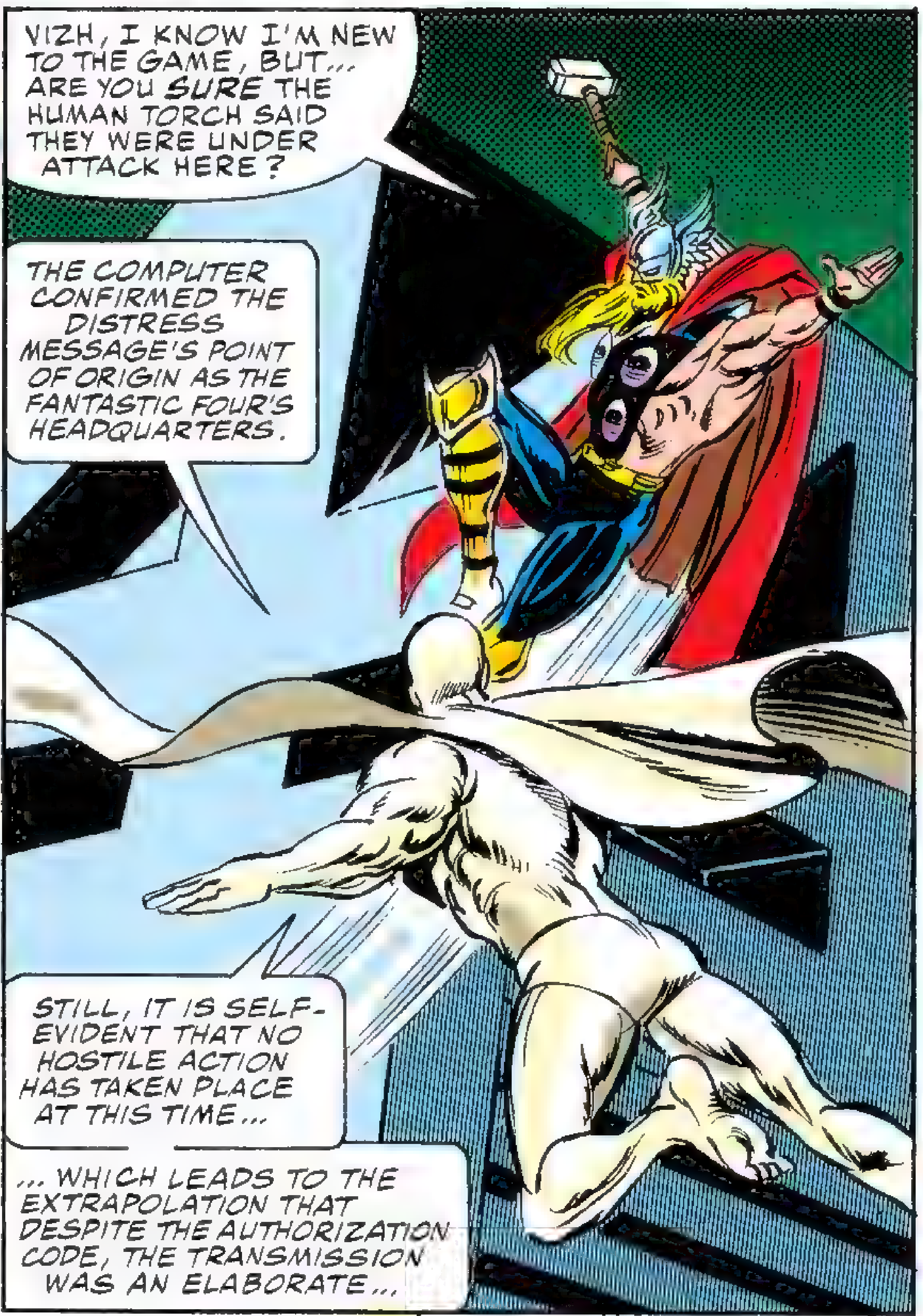

JOHNNY, IT'S CRYSTAL! WHAT'S HAPPENED? WHERE ARE REED, SUE AND BEN? IS FRANKLIN--?
CRYS! HURRY! IT'S BAD-- WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME! WE--

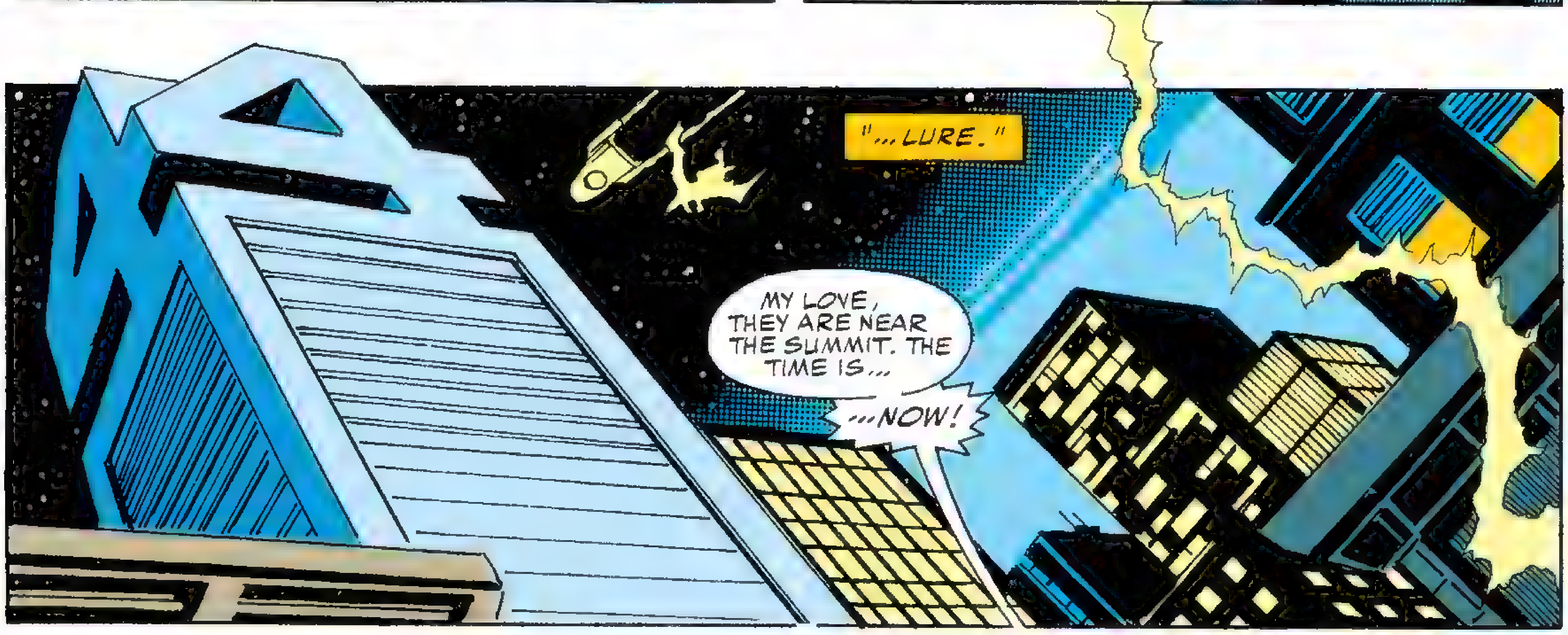

THOOOM!

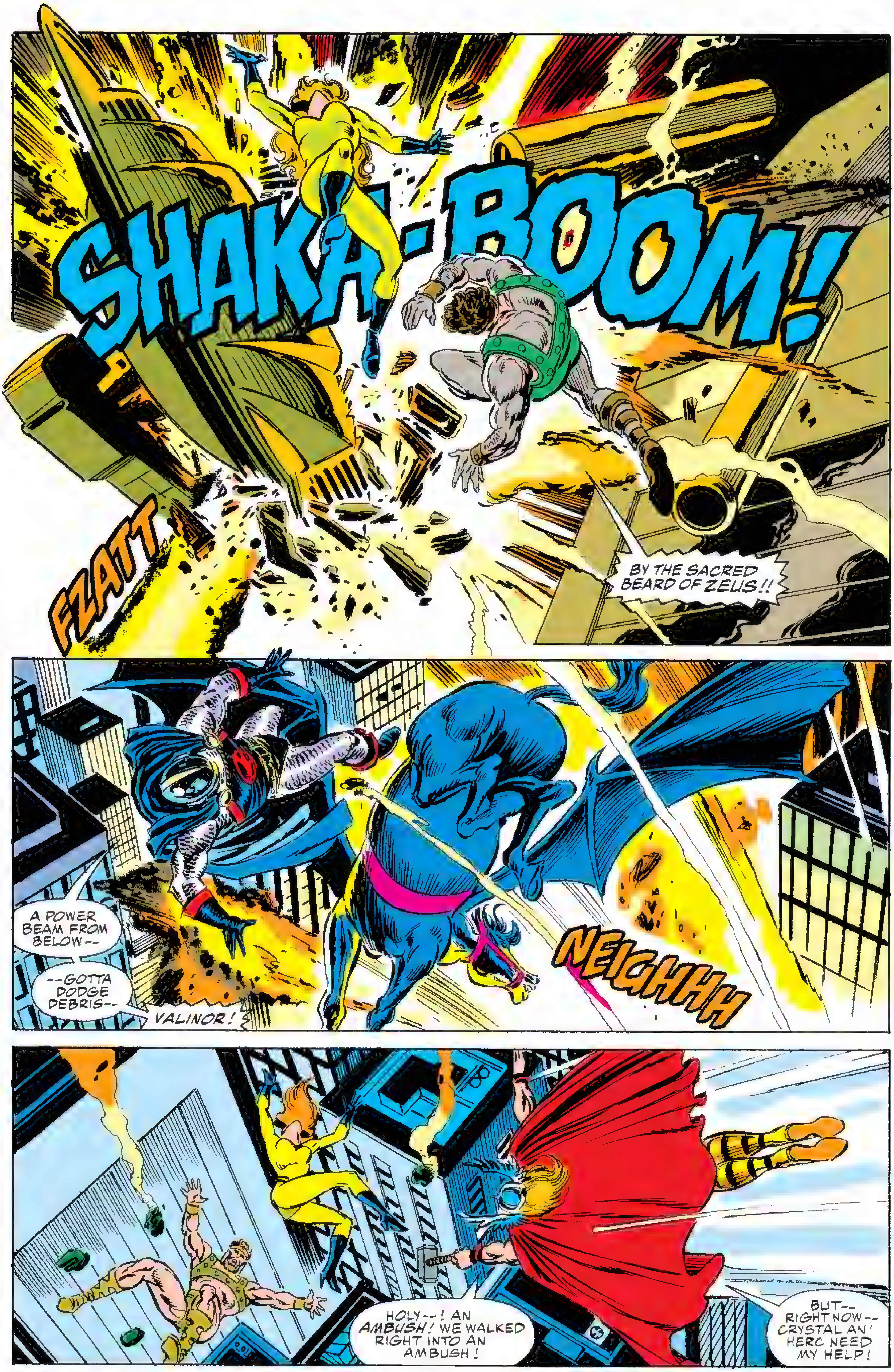

OH, NO! NO!
VISION, WE'VE GOT TO HELP THEM! WE'VE GOT TO!
A MOMENT, CRYSTAL.
COMPUTER, PLEASE VERIFY TRANSMISSION, BEGINNING TIMEFRAME 18:57:24.
TRANSMISSION CONFIRMED. AUTHORIZED SEQUENTIAL EMERGENCY CODE ASSIGNED FANTASTIC FOUR FOR AVENGERS PRIORITY OVERRIDE.
VERY WELL.
COMPUTER, PLEASE ALERT ALL AVENGERS CURRENTLY RESIDING IN THE MANSION...
...IF THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAVE BEEN ATTACKED...
"...THEN WE WILL AVENGE THEM."

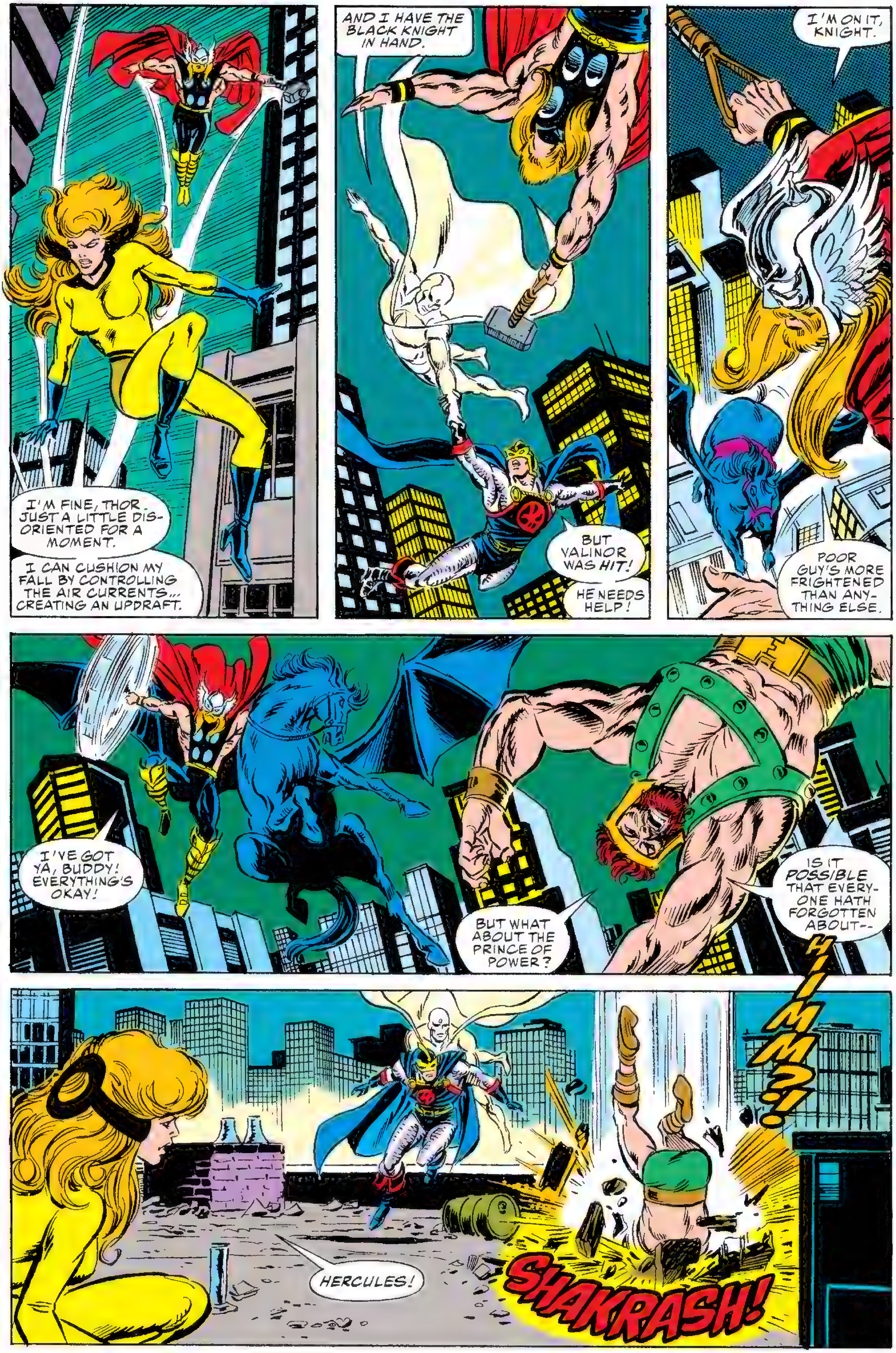

FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA-- TWELVE O'CLOCK HIGH.
LOOKS PEACEFUL ENOUGH.
THOR, WE WILL NEED YOU TO RECONNOITER.
PLEASE PROCEED.
GOTCHA, VIZH.

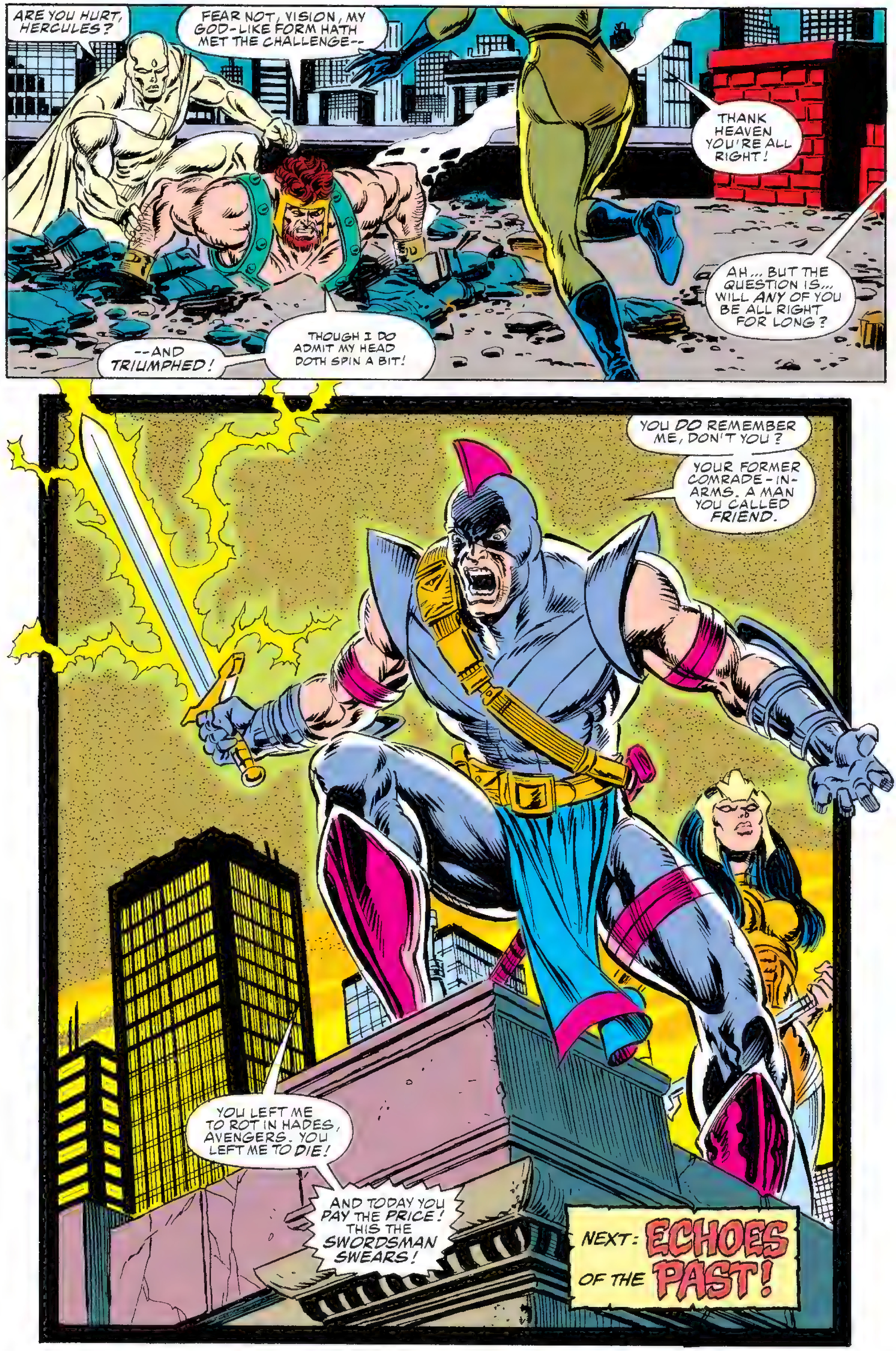

THAT'S THE *THIRD* FLY-BY, GUYS, AND THERE'S NO SIGN OF AN ATTACK OR EVEN DAMAGE ANYWHERE!
MATTER OF FACT, I DON'T EVEN THINK THE FF ARE *HOME.*


VIZH, I KNOW I'M NEW TO THE GAME, BUT... ARE YOU *SURE* THE HUMAN TORCH SAID THEY WERE UNDER ATTACK HERE?
THE COMPUTER CONFIRMED THE DISTRESS MESSAGE'S POINT OF ORIGIN AS THE FANTASTIC FOUR'S HEADQUARTERS.
STILL, IT IS SELF-EVIDENT THAT NO HOSTILE ACTION HAS TAKEN PLACE AT THIS TIME...
... WHICH LEADS TO THE EXTRAPOLATION THAT DESPITE THE AUTHORIZATION CODE, THE TRANSMISSION WAS AN ELABORATE...


"... LURE."
MY LOVE, THEY ARE NEAR THE SUMMIT. THE TIME IS...
...NOW!

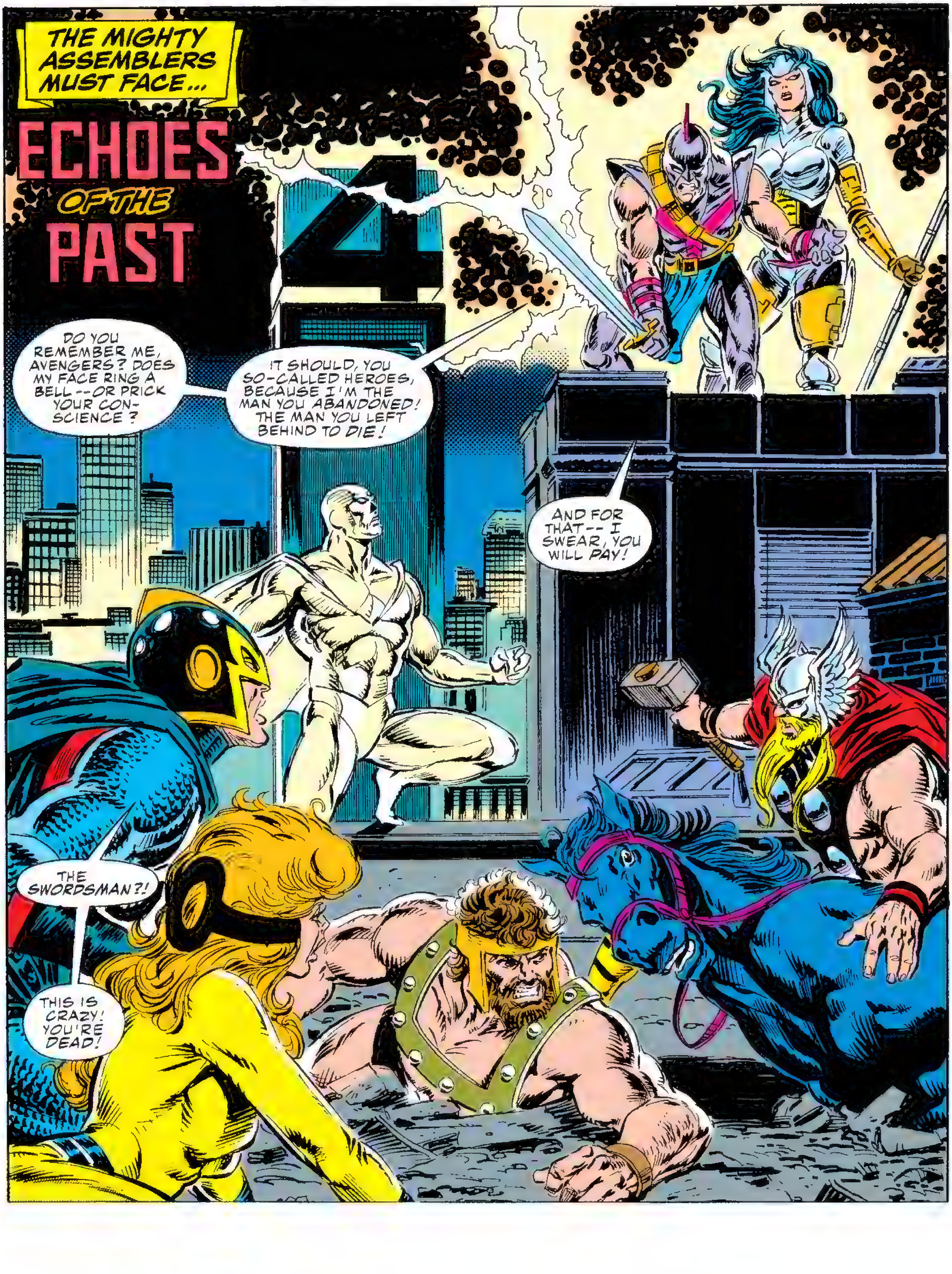

SHAKA-BOOM!
FZATT
BY THE SACRED BEARD OF ZEUS!!
A POWER BEAM FROM BELOW--
--GOTTA DODGE DEBRIS--
VALINOR!
NEIGHHH
HOLY--! AN AMBUSH! WE WALKED RIGHT INTO AN AMBUSH!
BUT-- RIGHT NOW-- CRYSTAL AN' HERC NEED MY HELP!

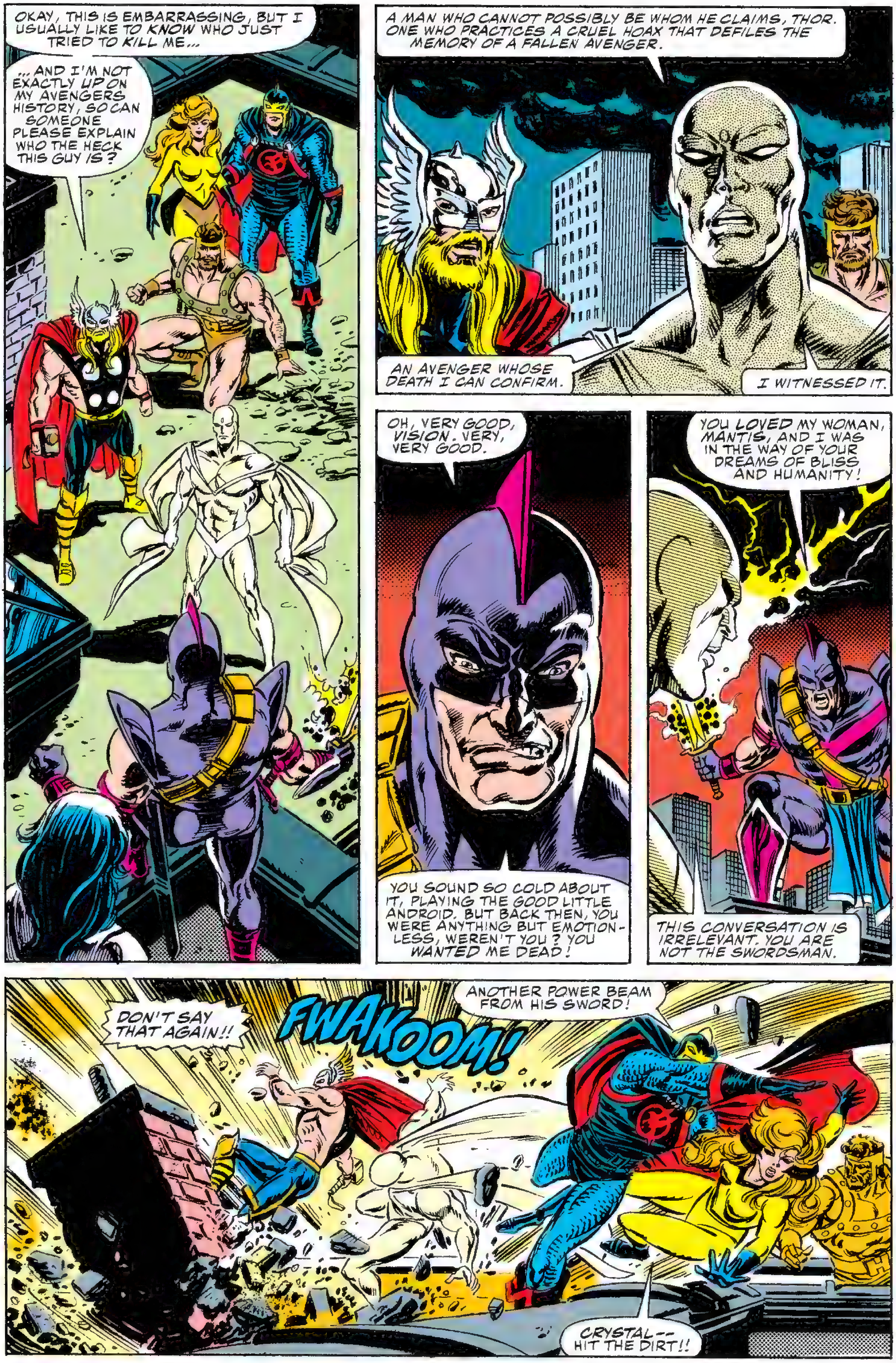

I'M FINE, THOR. JUST A LITTLE DISORIENTED FOR A MOMENT.
I CAN CUSHION MY FALL BY CONTROLLING THE AIR CURRENTS... CREATING AN UPDRAFT.
AND I HAVE THE BLACK KNIGHT IN HAND.
BUT VALINOR WAS *HIT!*
HE NEEDS HELP!
I'M ON IT, KNIGHT.
POOR GUY'S MORE FRIGHTENED THAN ANYTHING ELSE.
I'VE GOT YA, BUDDY! EVERYTHING'S OKAY!
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE PRINCE OF POWER?
IS IT *POSSIBLE* THAT EVERYONE HATH FORGOTTEN ABOUT--
HIIMM?!
HERCULES!
SHAKRASH!

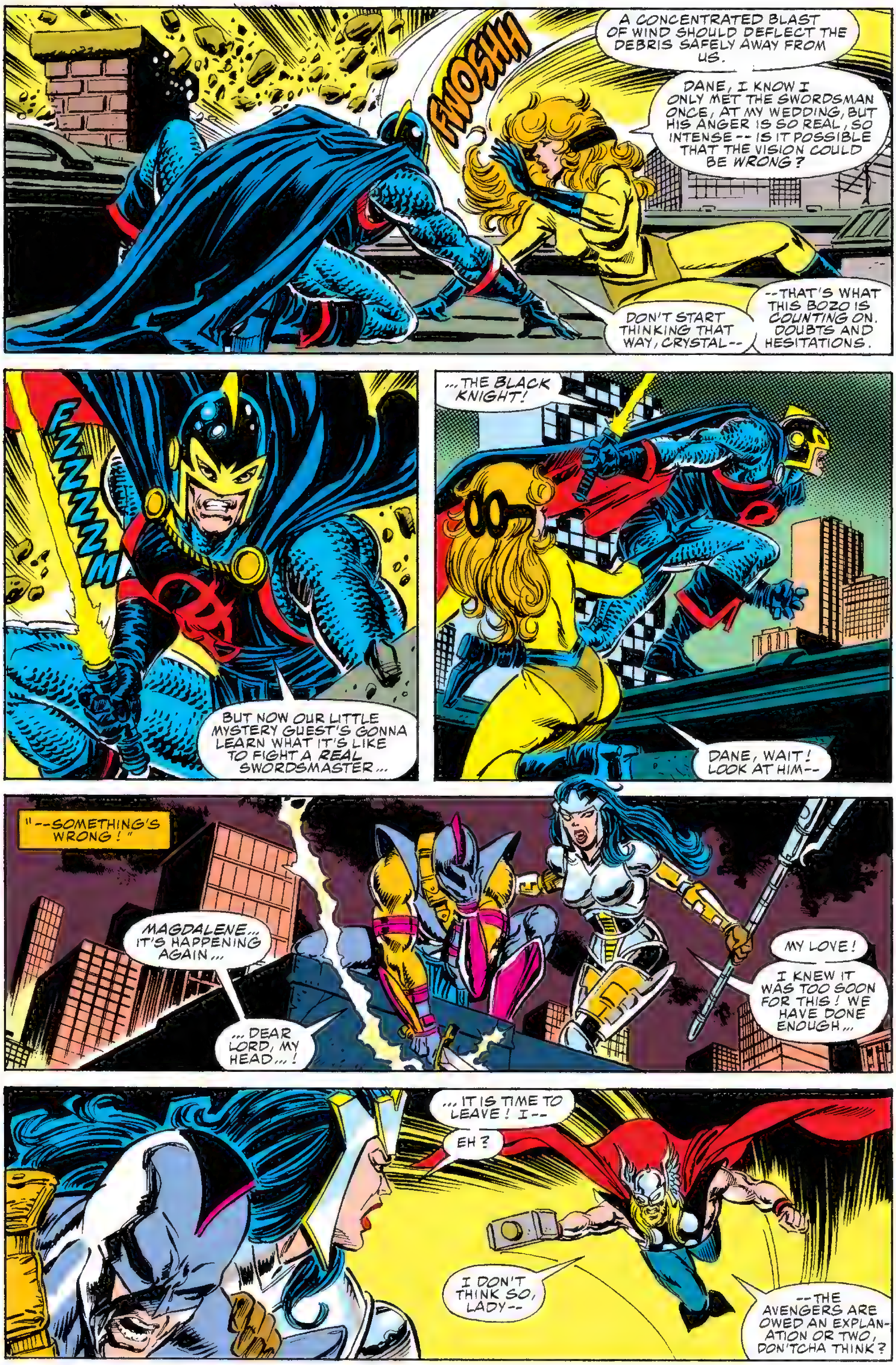

ARE YOU HURT, HERCULES?
FEAR NOT, VISION, MY GOD-LIKE FORM HATH MET THE CHALLENGE--
--AND TRIUMPHED!
THOUGH I DO ADMIT MY HEAD DOTH SPIN A BIT!
THANK HEAVEN YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
AH... BUT THE QUESTION IS... WILL ANY OF YOU BE ALL RIGHT FOR LONG?
YOU DO REMEMBER ME, DON'T YOU?
YOUR FORMER COMRADE-IN-ARMS. A MAN YOU CALLED FRIEND.
YOU LEFT ME TO ROT IN HADES, AVENGERS. YOU LEFT ME TO DIE!
AND TODAY YOU PAY THE PRICE! THIS THE SWORDSMAN SWEARS!
NEXT: ECHOES OF THE PAST!

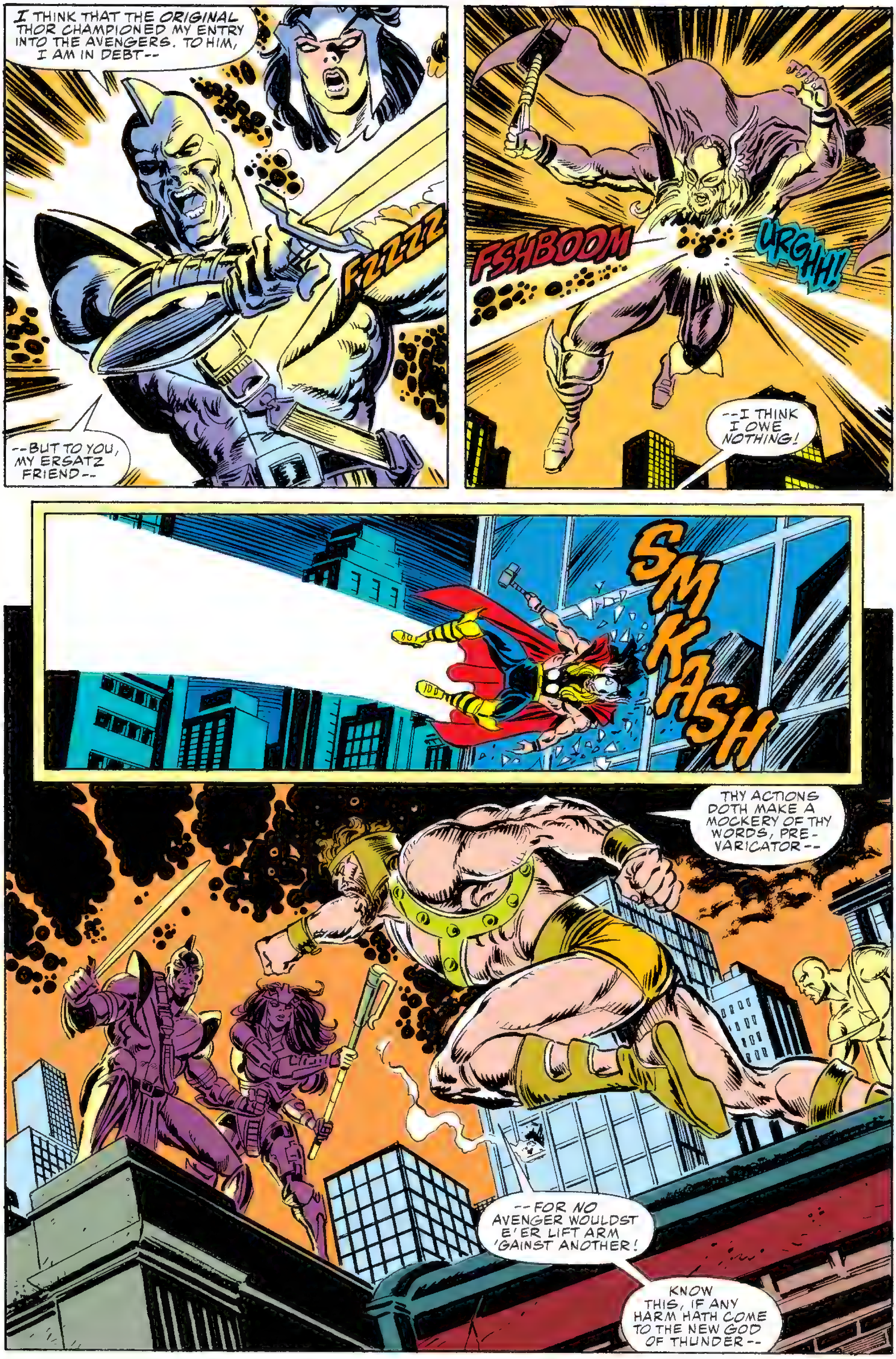
MARVEL® COMICS
AVENGERS®
DUEL OF THE DARK KNIGHTS!
™
$1.25 US
$1.50 CAN/UK 70p
344
FEB
CC 02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
© 1991 MARVEL ENT GRP, INC
EPTING & PALMER

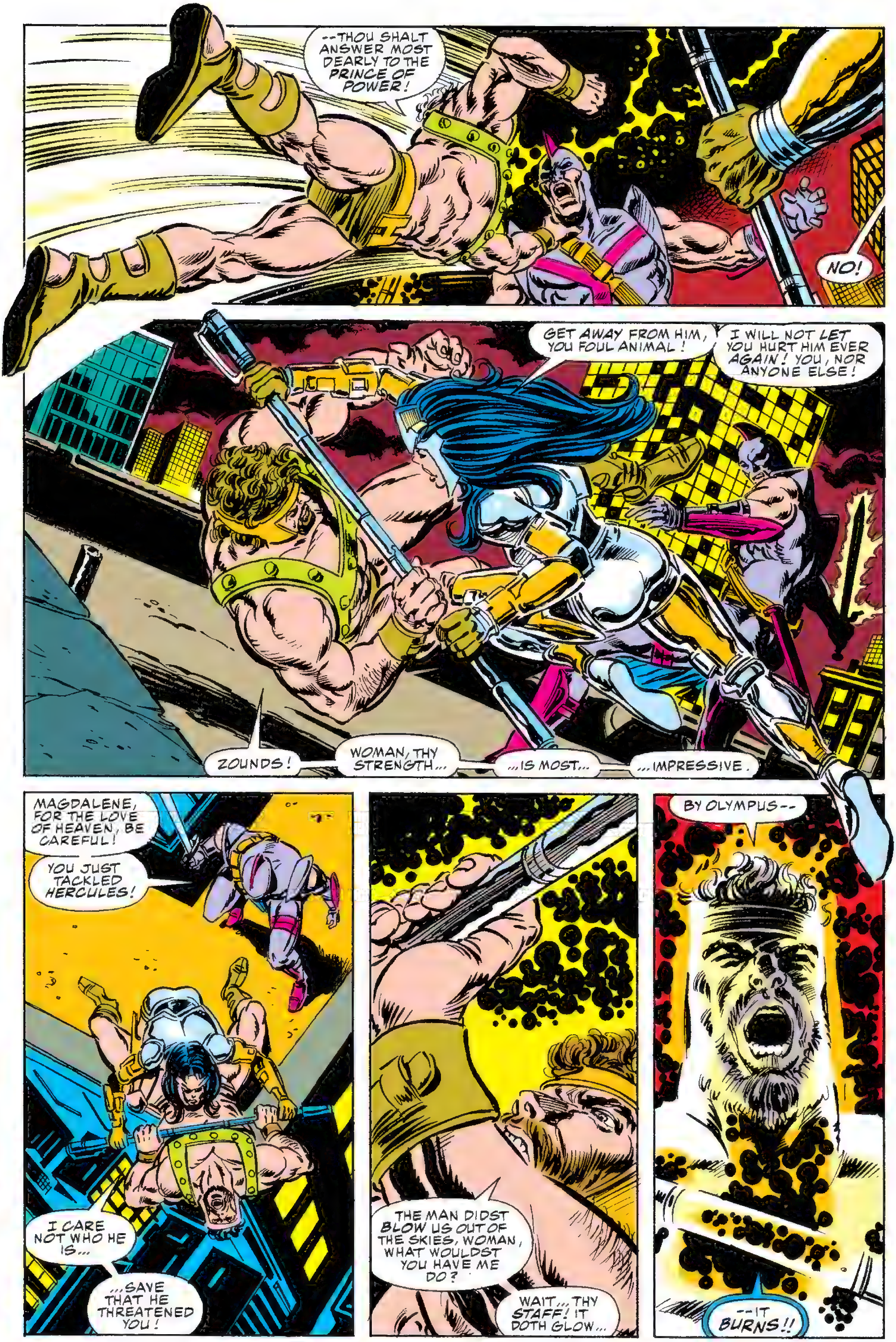
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

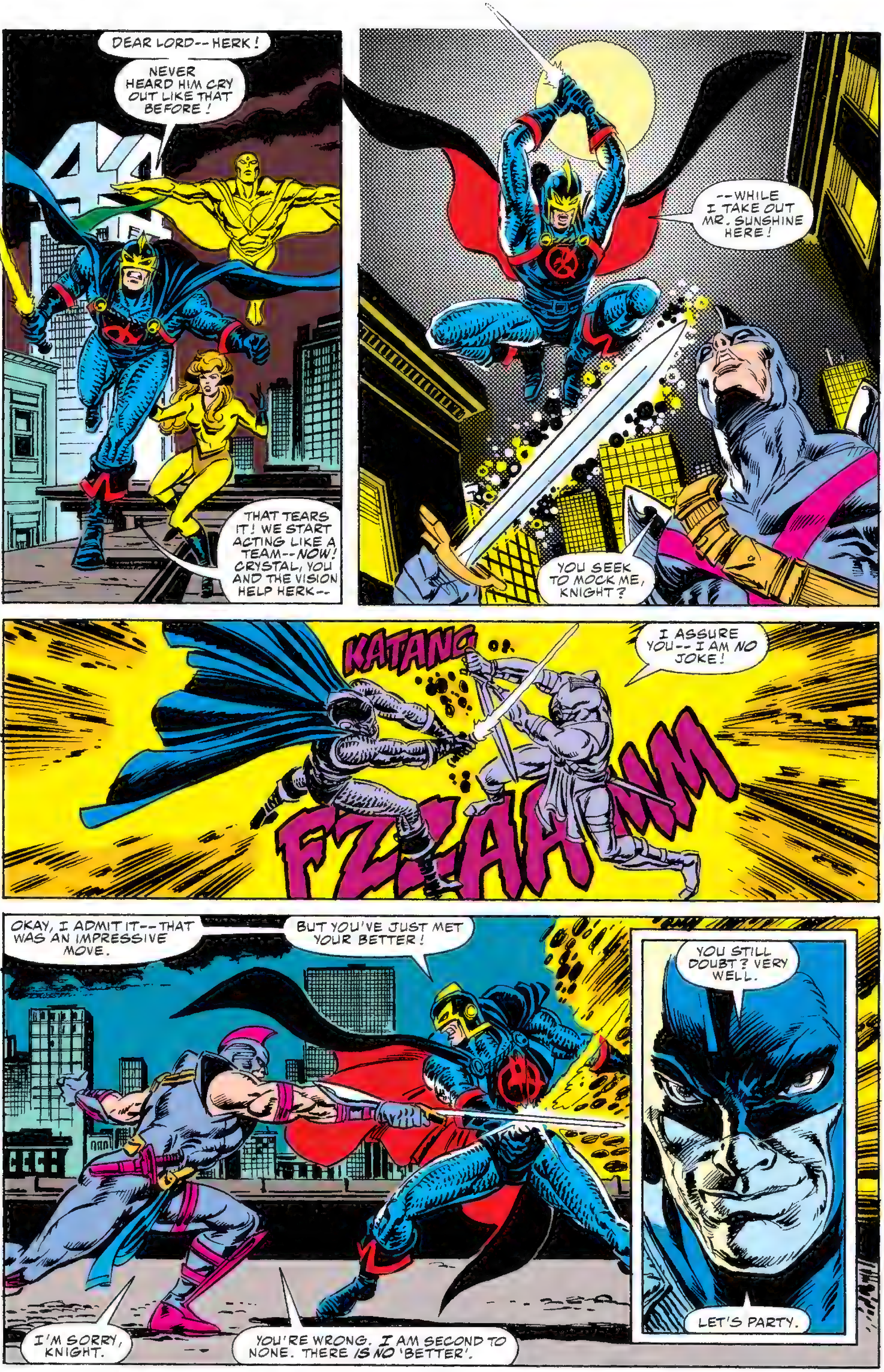

THE MIGHTY ASSEMBLERS MUST FACE...
ECHOES OF THE PAST
4
DO YOU REMEMBER ME, AVENGERS? DOES MY FACE RING A BELL -- OR PRICK YOUR CONSCIENCE?
IT SHOULD, YOU SO-CALLED HEROES, BECAUSE I'M THE MAN YOU ABANDONED! THE MAN YOU LEFT BEHIND TO DIE!
AND FOR THAT -- I SWEAR, YOU WILL PAY!
THE SWORDSMAN?!
THIS IS CRAZY! YOU'RE DEAD!

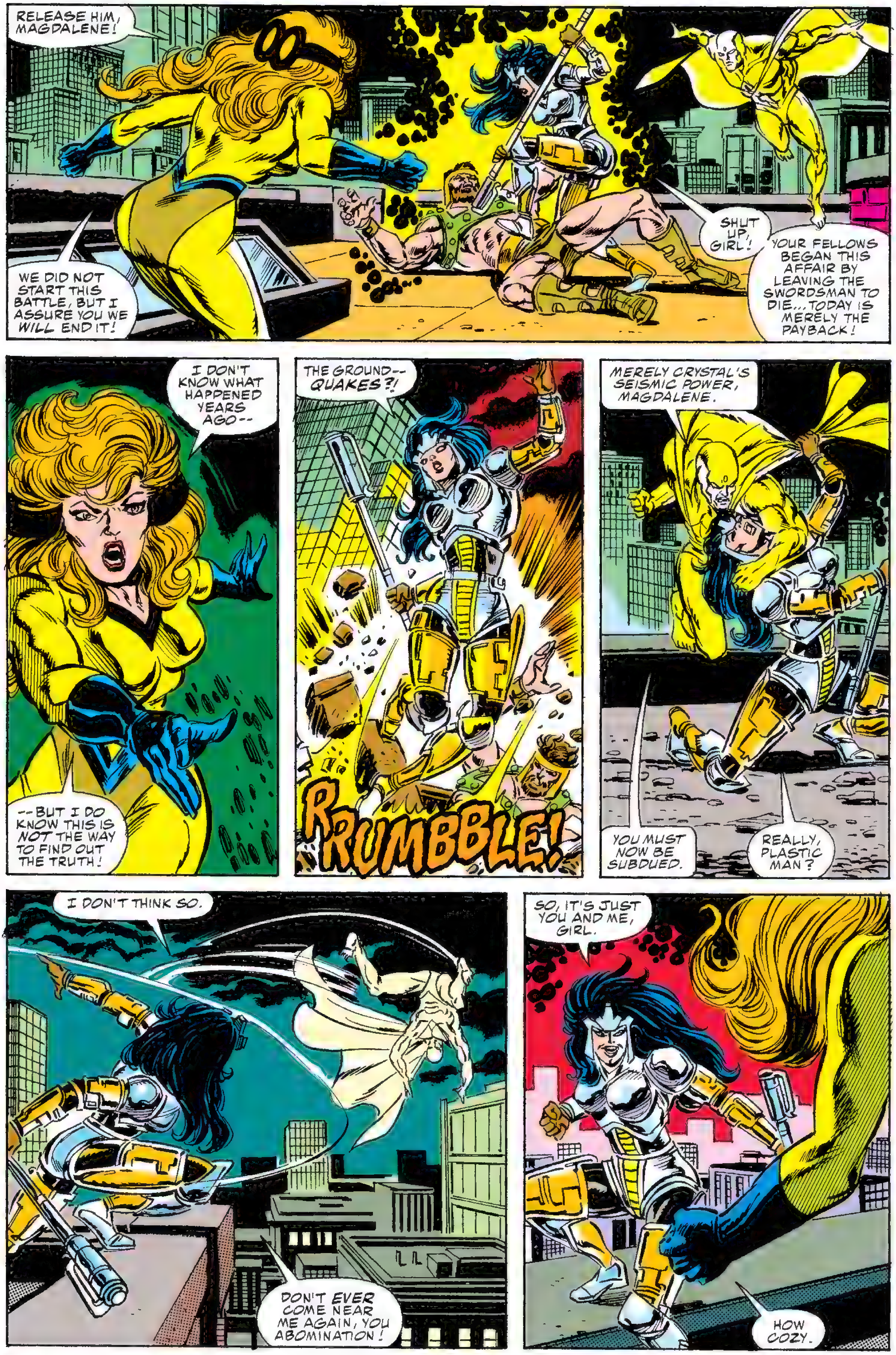

OKAY, THIS IS EMBARRASSING, BUT I USUALLY LIKE TO KNOW WHO JUST TRIED TO KILL ME...
... AND I'M NOT EXACTLY UP ON MY AVENGERS HISTORY, SO CAN SOMEONE PLEASE EXPLAIN WHO THE HECK THIS GUY IS?
A MAN WHO CANNOT POSSIBLY BE WHOM HE CLAIMS, THOR. ONE WHO PRACTICES A CRUEL HOAX THAT DEFILES THE MEMORY OF A FALLEN AVENGER.
AN AVENGER WHOSE DEATH I CAN CONFIRM.
I WITNESSED IT.
OH, VERY GOOD, VISION. VERY, VERY GOOD.
YOU SOUND SO COLD ABOUT IT, PLAYING THE GOOD LITTLE ANDROID. BUT BACK THEN, YOU WERE ANYTHING BUT EMOTIONLESS, WEREN'T YOU? YOU WANTED ME DEAD!
YOU LOVED MY WOMAN, MANTIS, AND I WAS IN THE WAY OF YOUR DREAMS OF BLISS AND HUMANITY!
THIS CONVERSATION IS IRRELEVANT. YOU ARE NOT THE SWORDSMAN.
DON'T SAY THAT AGAIN!!
FWAKOOM!
ANOTHER POWER BEAM FROM HIS SWORD!
CRYSTAL-- HIT THE DIRT!!

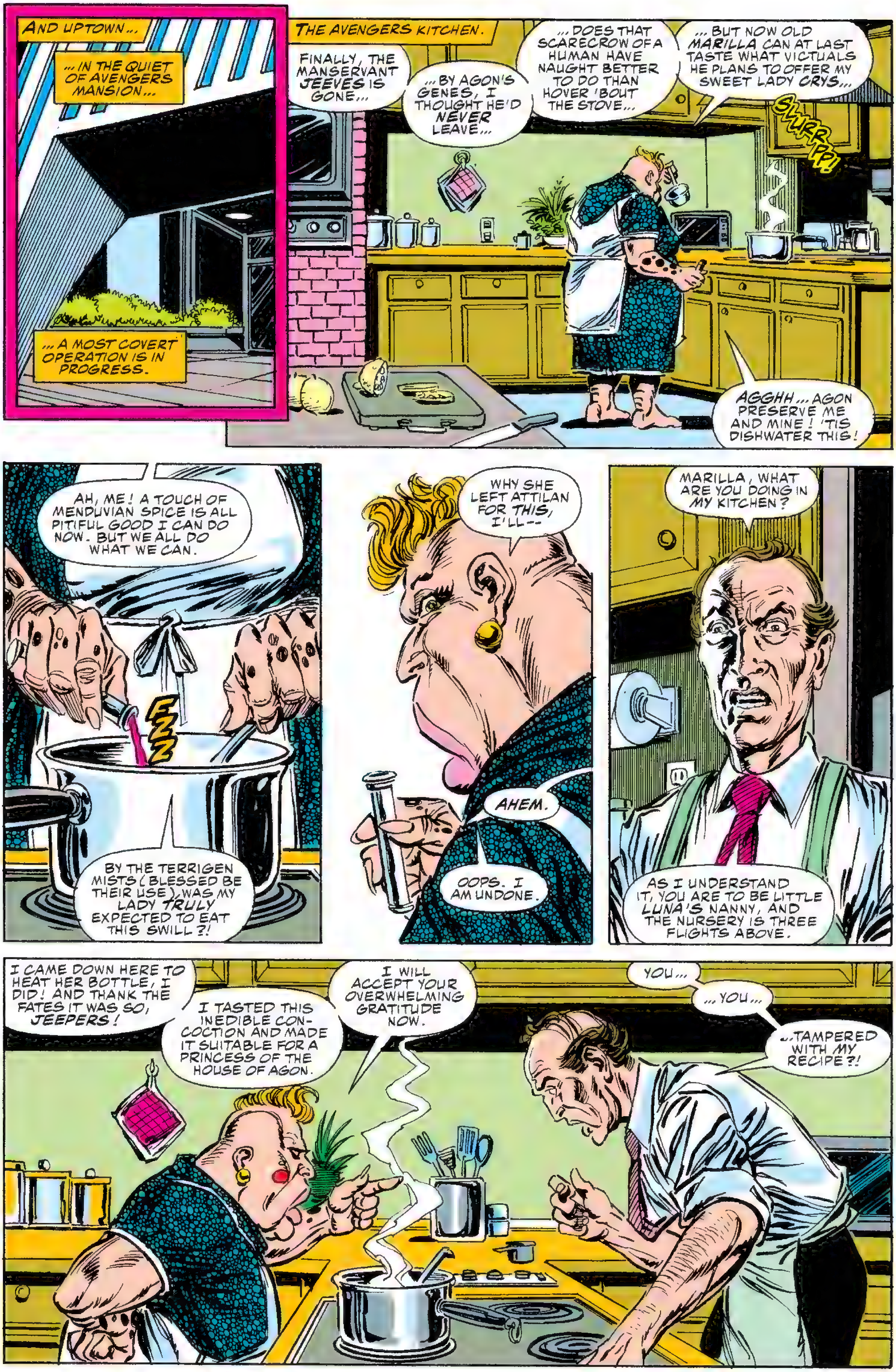

FWOSHH
A CONCENTRATED BLAST OF WIND SHOULD DEFLECT THE DEBRIS SAFELY AWAY FROM US.
DANE, I KNOW I ONLY MET THE SWORDSMAN ONCE, AT MY WEDDING, BUT HIS ANGER IS SO REAL, SO INTENSE -- IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE VISION COULD BE *WRONG*?
DON'T START THINKING THAT WAY, CRYSTAL--
--THAT'S WHAT THIS BOZO IS COUNTING ON. DOUBTS AND HESITATIONS.
FZZZZZM
BUT NOW OUR LITTLE MYSTERY GUEST'S GONNA LEARN WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FIGHT A *REAL* SWORDSMASTER...
...THE BLACK KNIGHT!
DANE, WAIT! LOOK AT HIM--
"--SOMETHING'S WRONG!"
MAGDALENE... IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN...
...DEAR LORD, MY HEAD...!
MY LOVE!
I KNEW IT WAS TOO SOON FOR THIS! WE HAVE DONE ENOUGH...
...IT IS TIME TO LEAVE! I--
EH?
I DON'T THINK SO, LADY--
--THE AVENGERS ARE OWED AN EXPLANATION OR TWO, DON'TCHA THINK?

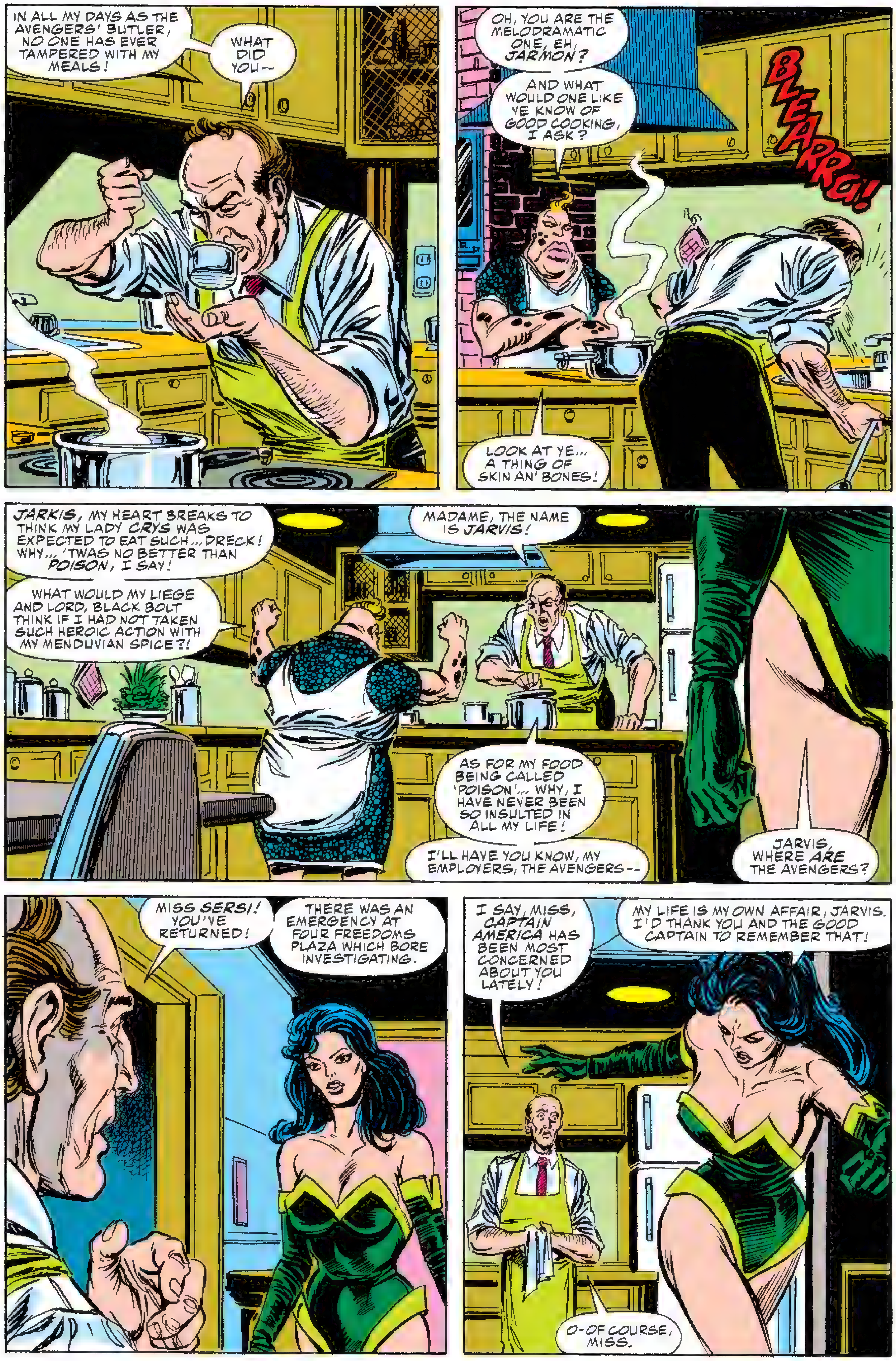

I THINK THAT THE ORIGINAL THOR CHAMPIONED MY ENTRY INTO THE AVENGERS. TO HIM, I AM IN DEBT--
FZZZZ
--BUT TO YOU, MY ERSATZ FRIEND--
FSHBOOM
URGHH!
--I THINK I OWE NOTHING!
SMKASH
THY ACTIONS DOTH MAKE A MOCKERY OF THY WORDS, PREVARICATOR--
--FOR NO AVENGER WOULDST E'ER LIFT ARM 'GAINST ANOTHER!
KNOW THIS, IF ANY HARM HATH COME TO THE NEW GOD OF THUNDER--

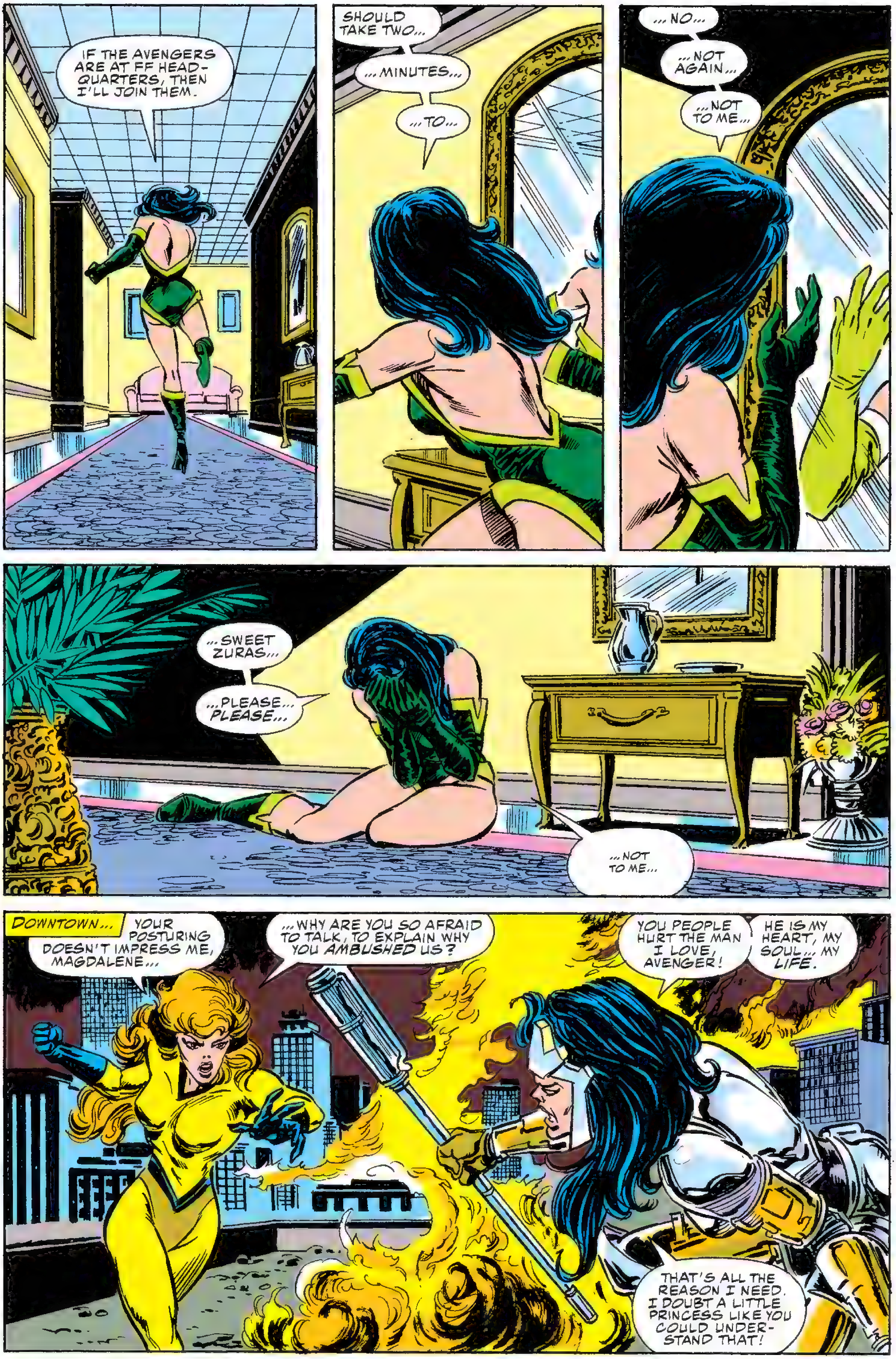

--THOU SHALT ANSWER MOST DEARLY TO THE PRINCE OF POWER!
NO!
GET AWAY FROM HIM, YOU FOUL ANIMAL!
I WILL NOT LET YOU HURT HIM EVER AGAIN! YOU, NOR ANYONE ELSE!
ZOUNDS!
WOMAN, THY STRENGTH...
...IS MOST...
...IMPRESSIVE.
MAGDALENE, FOR THE LOVE OF HEAVEN, BE CAREFUL!
YOU JUST TACKLED HERCULES!
I CARE NOT WHO HE IS...
...SAVE THAT HE THREATENED YOU!
THE MAN DIDST BLOW US OUT OF THE SKIES, WOMAN, WHAT WOULDST YOU HAVE ME DO?
WAIT... THY STAFF! IT DOTH GLOW...
BY OLYMPUS--
--IT BURNS!!

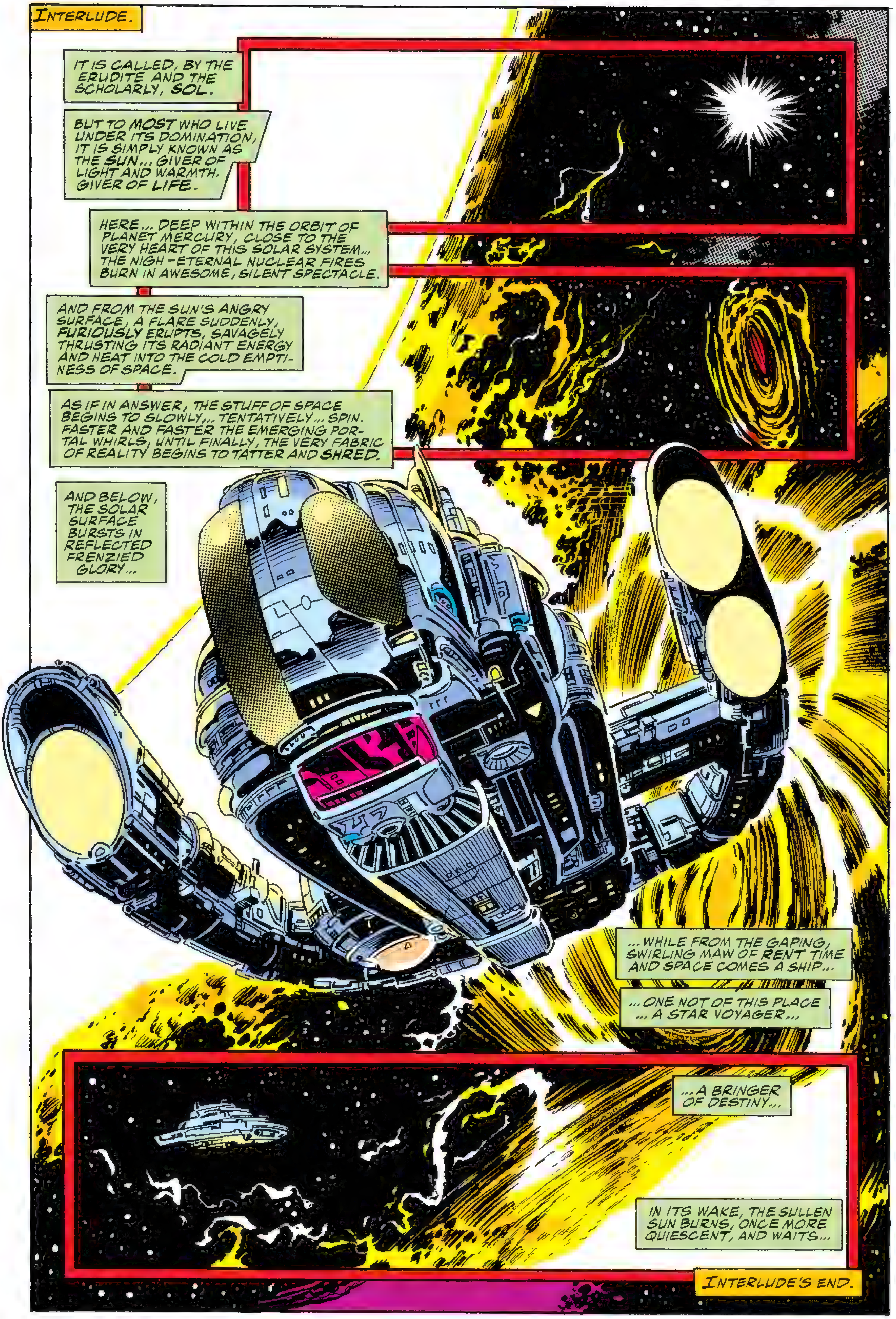

DEAR LORD--HERK!
NEVER HEARD HIM CRY OUT LIKE THAT BEFORE!
THAT TEARS IT! WE START ACTING LIKE A TEAM--*NOW*! CRYSTAL, YOU AND THE VISION HELP HERK--
--WHILE I TAKE OUT MR. SUNSHINE HERE!
YOU SEEK TO MOCK ME, KNIGHT?
KATANG
I ASSURE YOU-- I AM *NO* JOKE!
FZZAAMM
OKAY, I ADMIT IT--THAT WAS AN IMPRESSIVE MOVE.
BUT YOU'VE JUST MET YOUR BETTER!
I'M SORRY, KNIGHT.
YOU'RE WRONG. *I* AM SECOND TO NONE. THERE *IS NO* 'BETTER'.
YOU STILL DOUBT? VERY WELL.
LET'S PARTY.


RELEASE HIM, MAGDALENE!
WE DID NOT START THIS BATTLE, BUT I ASSURE YOU WE *WILL* END IT!
SHUT UP, GIRL!
YOUR FELLOWS BEGAN THIS AFFAIR BY LEAVING THE SWORDSMAN TO DIE... TODAY IS MERELY THE PAYBACK!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED YEARS AGO--
--BUT I DO KNOW THIS IS *NOT* THE WAY TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH!
THE GROUND-- *QUAKES?!*
RRUMBBLE!
MERELY CRYSTAL'S SEISMIC POWER, MAGDALENE.
YOU MUST NOW BE SUBDUED.
REALLY, PLASTIC MAN?
I DON'T THINK SO.
DON'T EVER COME NEAR ME AGAIN, YOU ABOMINATION!
SO, IT'S JUST YOU AND ME, GIRL.
HOW COZY.


AND UPTOWN...
...IN THE QUIET OF AVENGERS MANSION...
...A MOST COVERT OPERATION IS IN PROGRESS.
THE AVENGERS KITCHEN.
FINALLY, THE MANSERVANT JEEVES IS GONE...
...BY AGON'S GENES, I THOUGHT HE'D NEVER LEAVE...
...DOES THAT SCARECROW OF A HUMAN HAVE NAUGHT BETTER TO DO THAN HOVER 'BOUT THE STOVE...
...BUT NOW OLD MARILLA CAN AT LAST TASTE WHAT VICTUALS HE PLANS TO OFFER MY SWEET LADY CRYS...
SLURRPP!
AGGHH... AGON PRESERVE ME AND MINE! 'TIS DISHWATER THIS!
AH, ME! A TOUCH OF MENDUVIAN SPICE IS ALL PITIFUL GOOD I CAN DO NOW. BUT WE ALL DO WHAT WE CAN.
FZZ
BY THE TERRIGEN MISTS (BLESSED BE THEIR USE), WAS MY LADY TRULY EXPECTED TO EAT THIS SWILL?!
WHY SHE LEFT ATTILAN FOR THIS, I'LL--
AHEM.
OOPS. I AM UNDONE.
MARILLA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY KITCHEN?
AS I UNDERSTAND IT, YOU ARE TO BE LITTLE LUNA'S NANNY, AND THE NURSERY IS THREE FLIGHTS ABOVE.
I CAME DOWN HERE TO HEAT HER BOTTLE, I DID! AND THANK THE FATES IT WAS SO, JEEPERS!
I TASTED THIS INEDIBLE CONCOCTION AND MADE IT SUITABLE FOR A PRINCESS OF THE HOUSE OF AGON.
I WILL ACCEPT YOUR OVERWHELMING GRATITUDE NOW.
YOU...
...YOU...
...TAMPERED WITH MY RECIPE?!


IN ALL MY DAYS AS THE AVENGERS' BUTLER, NO ONE HAS EVER TAMPERED WITH MY MEALS!
WHAT DID YOU--
OH, YOU ARE THE MELODRAMATIC ONE, EH, JARMON?
AND WHAT WOULD ONE LIKE YE KNOW OF GOOD COOKING, I ASK?
BLEARRG!
LOOK AT YE... A THING OF SKIN AN' BONES!
JARKIS, MY HEART BREAKS TO THINK MY LADY CRYS WAS EXPECTED TO EAT SUCH... DRECK! WHY... 'TWAS NO BETTER THAN POISON, I SAY!
WHAT WOULD MY LIEGE AND LORD, BLACK BOLT THINK IF I HAD NOT TAKEN SUCH HEROIC ACTION WITH MY MENDUVIAN SPICE?!
MADAME, THE NAME IS JARVIS!
AS FOR MY FOOD BEING CALLED 'POISON'... WHY, I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO INSULTED IN ALL MY LIFE!
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW, MY EMPLOYERS, THE AVENGERS--
JARVIS, WHERE ARE THE AVENGERS?
MISS SERSI! YOU'VE RETURNED!
THERE WAS AN EMERGENCY AT FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA WHICH BORE INVESTIGATING.
I SAY, MISS, CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS BEEN MOST CONCERNED ABOUT YOU LATELY!
MY LIFE IS MY OWN AFFAIR, JARVIS. I'D THANK YOU AND THE GOOD CAPTAIN TO REMEMBER THAT!
O-OF COURSE, MISS.

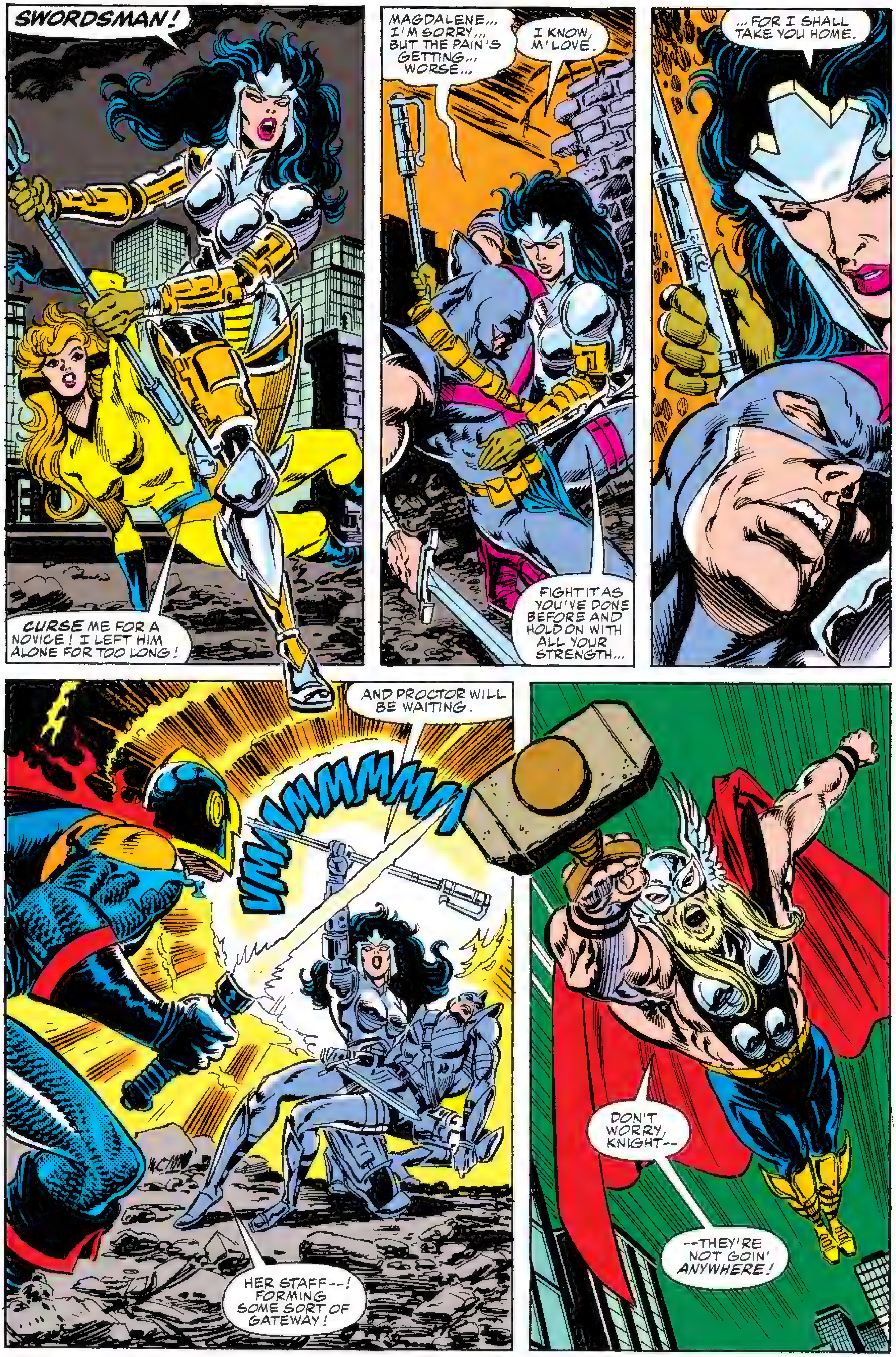

IF THE AVENGERS ARE AT FF HEADQUARTERS, THEN I'LL JOIN THEM.
SHOULD TAKE TWO...
...MINUTES...
...TO...
...NO...
...NOT AGAIN...
...NOT TO ME...
...SWEET ZURAS...
...PLEASE... PLEASE...
...NOT TO ME...
DOWNTOWN...
YOUR POSTURING DOESN'T IMPRESS ME, MAGDALENE...
...WHY ARE YOU SO AFRAID TO TALK, TO EXPLAIN WHY YOU AMBUSHED US?
YOU PEOPLE HURT THE MAN I LOVE, AVENGER!
HE IS MY HEART, MY SOUL... MY LIFE.
THAT'S ALL THE REASON I NEED. I DOUBT A LITTLE PRINCESS LIKE YOU COULD UNDERSTAND THAT!

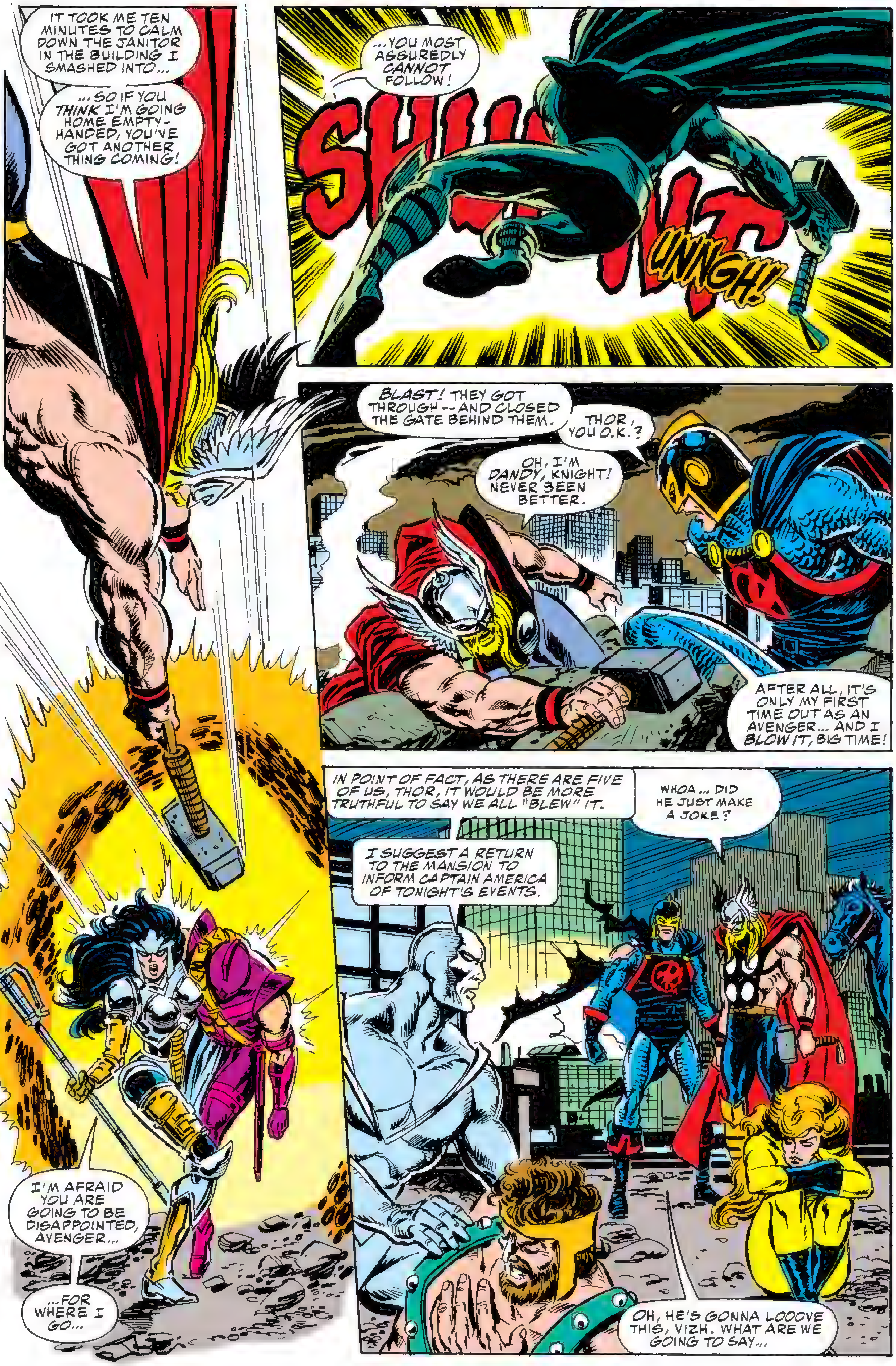

INTERLUDE.
IT IS CALLED, BY THE ERUDITE AND THE SCHOLARLY, SOL.
BUT TO MOST WHO LIVE UNDER ITS DOMINATION, IT IS SIMPLY KNOWN AS THE SUN... GIVER OF LIGHT AND WARMTH. GIVER OF LIFE.
HERE... DEEP WITHIN THE ORBIT OF PLANET MERCURY, CLOSE TO THE VERY HEART OF THIS SOLAR SYSTEM... THE NIGH-ETERNAL NUCLEAR FIRES BURN IN AWESOME, SILENT SPECTACLE.
AND FROM THE SUN'S ANGRY SURFACE, A FLARE SUDDENLY, FURIOUSLY ERUPTS, SAVAGELY THRUSTING ITS RADIANT ENERGY AND HEAT INTO THE COLD EMPTINESS OF SPACE.
AS IF IN ANSWER, THE STUFF OF SPACE BEGINS TO SLOWLY... TENTATIVELY... SPIN. FASTER AND FASTER THE EMERGING PORTAL WHIRLS, UNTIL FINALLY, THE VERY FABRIC OF REALITY BEGINS TO TATTER AND SHRED.
AND BELOW, THE SOLAR SURFACE BURSTS IN REFLECTED FRENZIED GLORY...
...WHILE FROM THE GAPING, SWIRLING MAW OF RENT TIME AND SPACE COMES A SHIP...
...ONE NOT OF THIS PLACE ...A STAR VOYAGER...
...A BRINGER OF DESTINY...
IN ITS WAKE, THE SULLEN SUN BURNS, ONCE MORE QUIESCENT, AND WAITS...
INTERLUDE'S END.

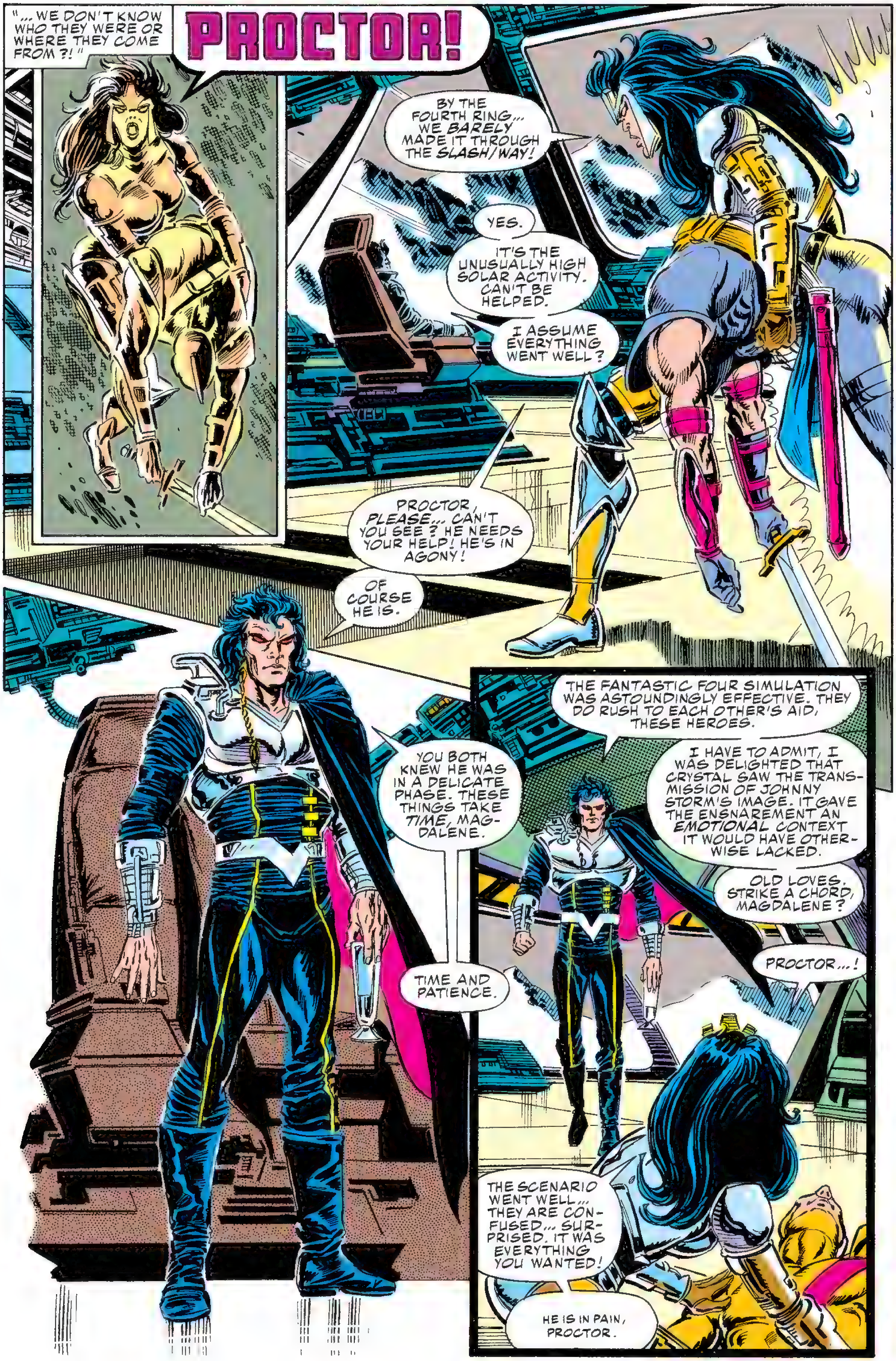
NEW YORK:
C'MON, 'SWORDSMAN', LET'S SEE YOUR STUFF!
FZAMM
AND MAYBE WHILE WE'RE AT IT...
...YOU CAN EXPLAIN HOW YOU TAPPED INTO OUR EMERGENCY CODES AND LURED US HERE!
ARE YOU TRULY IDIOTIC, KNIGHT, OR IS THIS JUST AN ACT?
I KNEW YOUR CODES BECAUSE--
--I AM ONE OF YOU!
SLASSH
UHNN
WELL, WHAT D'YOU KNOW?
FIRST BLOOD'S TO YOU, FRIEND. BUT--
--DON'T COUNT ON THAT AGAIN!
KA-TANG!

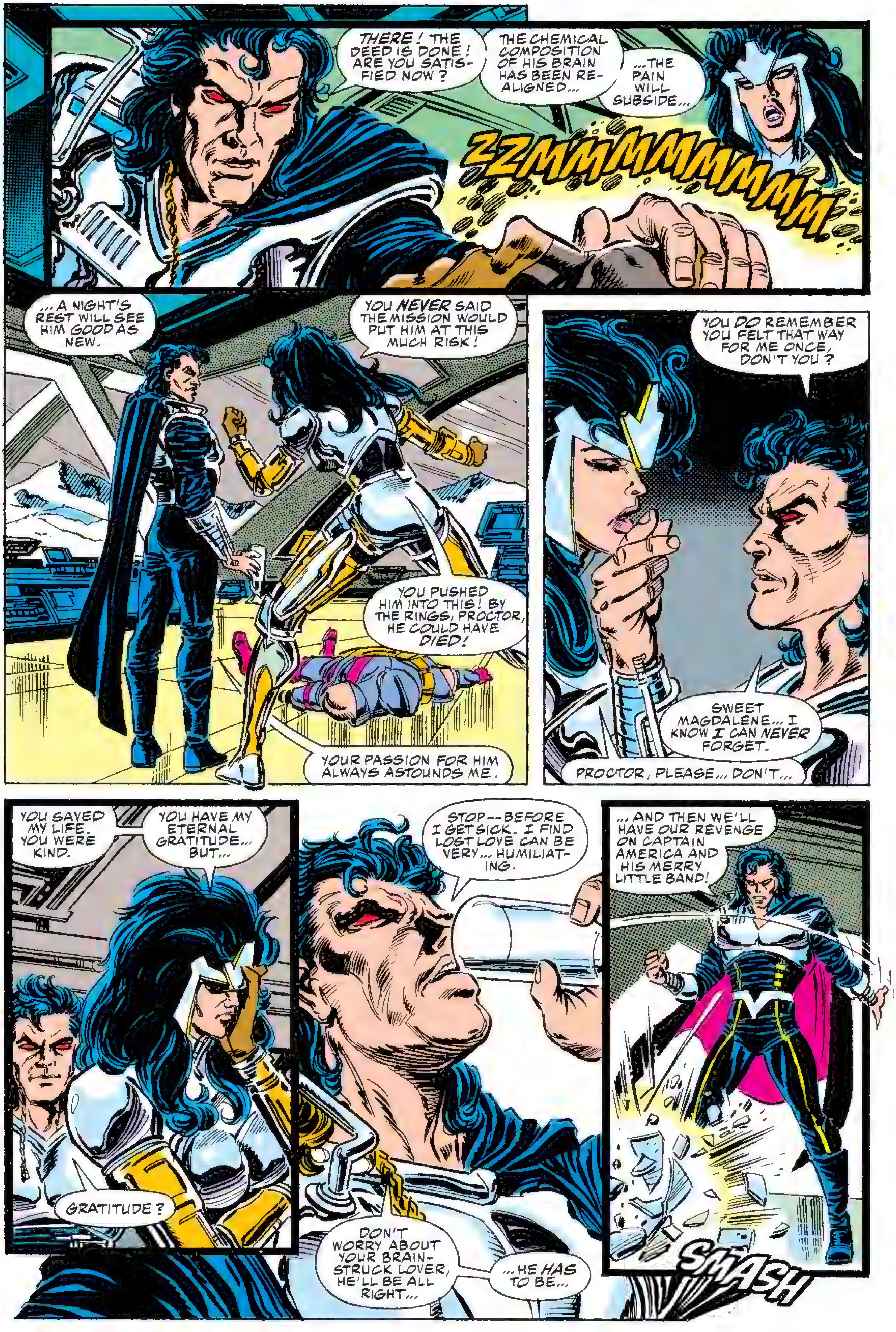
NOW, 'FESS UP, PAL. PLAY TIME'S OVER...
...IT'S TIME TO COME CLEAN...
...WHO ARE YOU *REALLY*?!
YOU WILL *NOT* LISTEN, WILL YOU?!
OR IS IT THAT THE TRUTH IS TOO PAINFUL, KNIGHT?
DOES IT *SHATTER* THE PRECIOUS *MYTH* OF THE NOBLE AVENGERS?
TO THINK I EVER THOUGHT YOU'D ACCEPTED ME AS A COMRADE--
--I WAS A *FOOL*!
KATZAMM
THE POUNDING... AGAIN!
...MY HEAD...
PROCTOR, HELP ME...
OOOH, TIRED, "SWORDY"? TOO BAD...
...'CAUSE THAT MEANS, I--

--GOTCHA!
ARGHH
FZAASSK
EVERY SYNAPSE IN YOUR BRAIN JUST GOT *STUN-BLASTED* BY MY LAS-SWORD'S NEURAL INHIBITORS!
NOT AS BLOODY AS MY EBONY SWORD, BUT JUST AS EFFECTIVE.
DON'T WORRY... IT'LL PASS.
IS... *THIS* HOW YOU... CLAIM VICTORY, THEN?
BY TAKING... ADVANTAGE... OF MY MOMENT OF PAIN?
PROCTOR... SAID THERE WAS NO... HONOR LEFT AMONG THE AVENGERS...
...I DID NOT WANT TO... BELIEVE IT. BUT... HE WAS RIGHT...
GODS!! WHY WON'T THE PAIN STOP?!

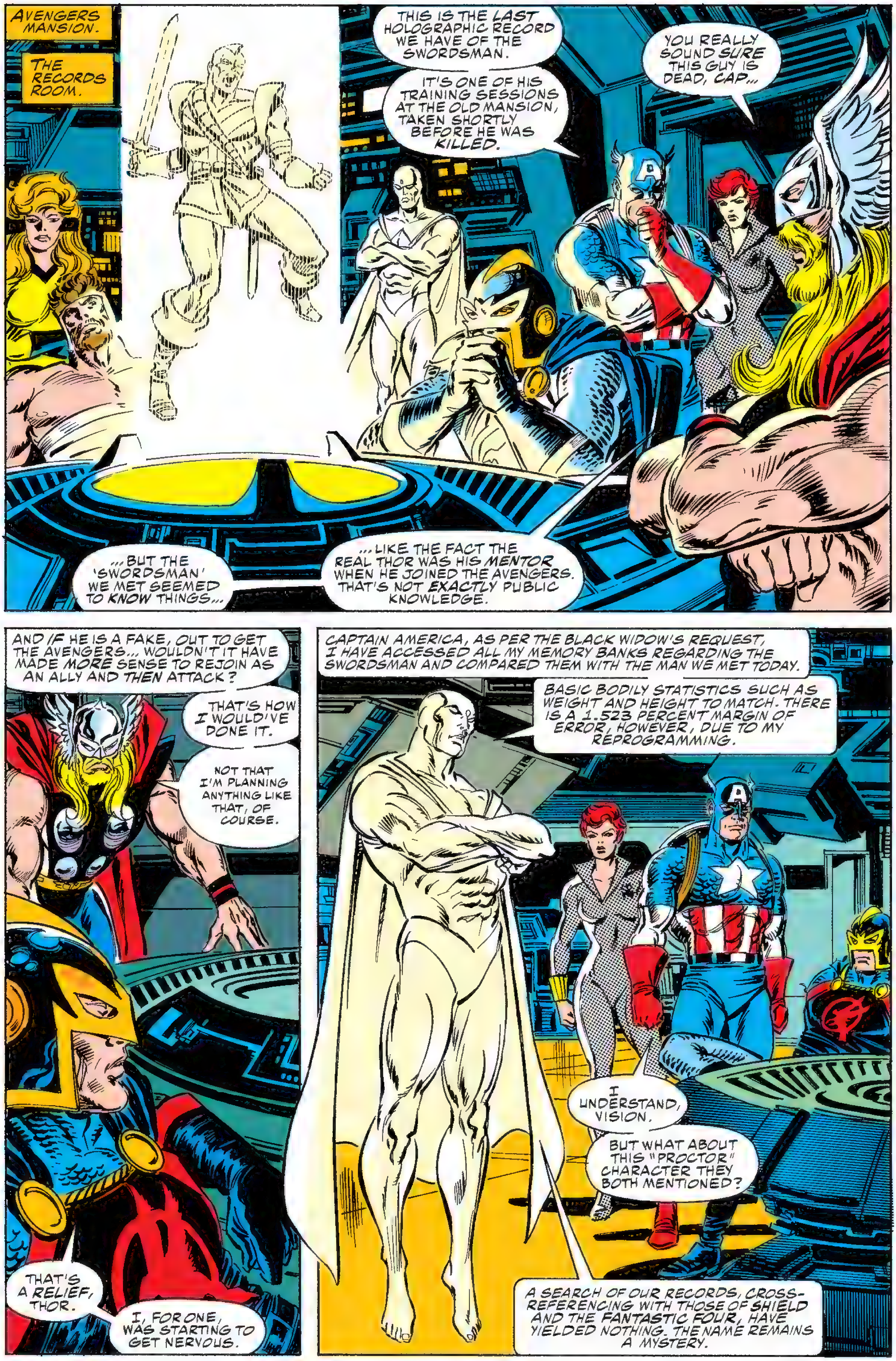

SWORDSMAN!
CURSE ME FOR A NOVICE! I LEFT HIM ALONE FOR TOO LONG!
MAGDALENE... I'M SORRY... BUT THE PAIN'S GETTING... WORSE...
I KNOW, M'LOVE.
FIGHT IT AS YOU'VE DONE BEFORE AND HOLD ON WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH...
...FOR I SHALL TAKE YOU HOME.
AND PROCTOR WILL BE WAITING.
VMMMMMM
HER STAFF--! FORMING SOME SORT OF GATEWAY!
DON'T WORRY, KNIGHT--
--THEY'RE NOT GOIN' ANYWHERE!

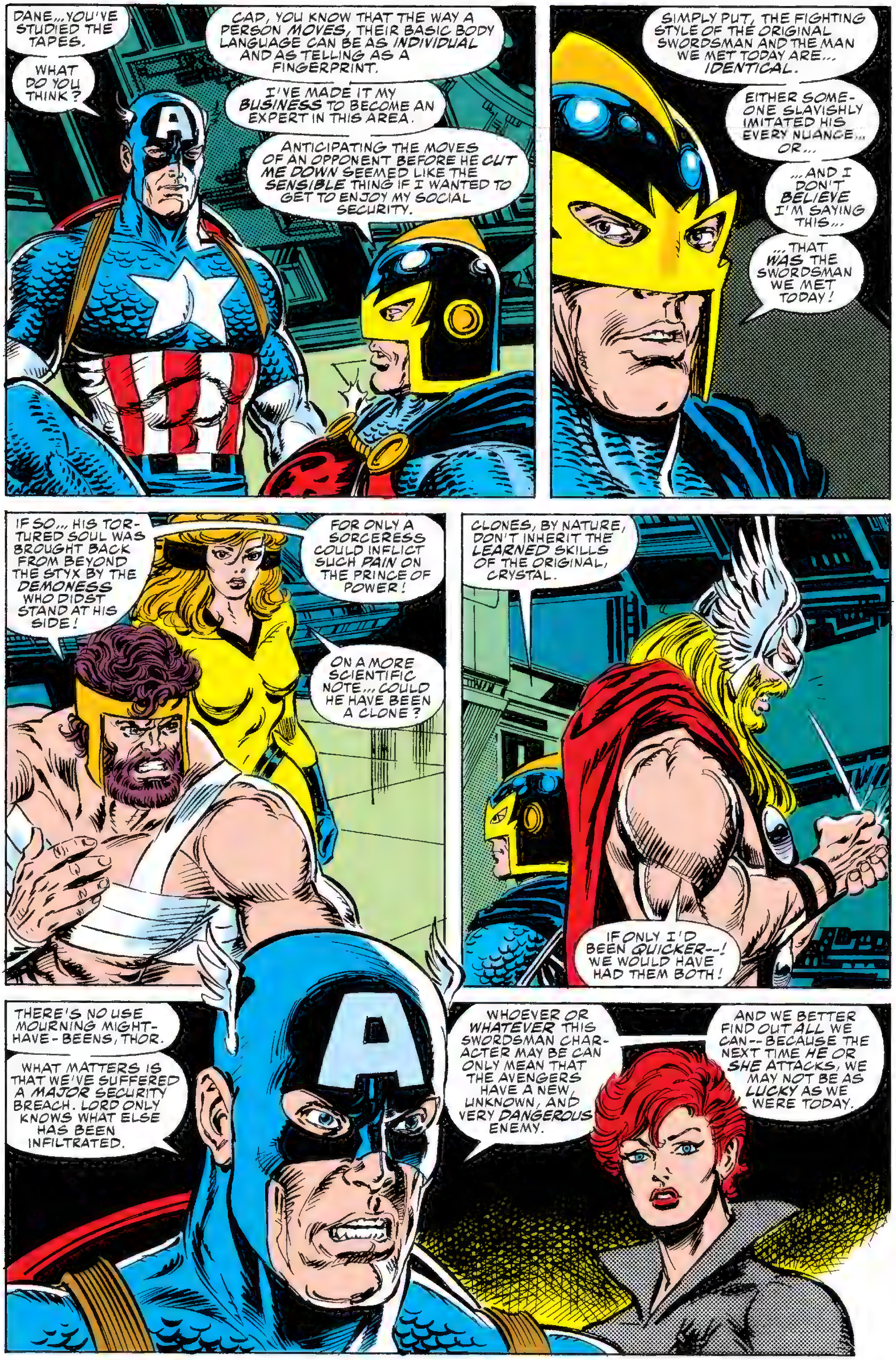

IT TOOK ME TEN MINUTES TO CALM DOWN THE JANITOR IN THE BUILDING I SMASHED INTO...
...SO IF YOU *THINK* I'M GOING HOME EMPTY-HANDED, YOU'VE GOT ANOTHER THING COMING!
I'M AFRAID YOU ARE GOING TO BE DISAPPOINTED, AVENGER...
...FOR WHERE I GO...
...YOU MOST ASSUREDLY *CANNOT* FOLLOW!
SHUNT
UNNGH!
BLAST! THEY GOT THROUGH--AND CLOSED THE GATE BEHIND THEM.
THOR, YOU O.K.?
OH, I'M *DANDY*, KNIGHT! NEVER BEEN BETTER.
AFTER ALL, IT'S ONLY MY FIRST TIME OUT AS AN AVENGER... AND I *BLOW IT*, BIG TIME!
IN POINT OF FACT, AS THERE ARE FIVE OF US, THOR, IT WOULD BE MORE TRUTHFUL TO SAY WE ALL "BLEW" IT.
I SUGGEST A RETURN TO THE MANSION TO INFORM CAPTAIN AMERICA OF TONIGHT'S EVENTS.
WHOA... DID HE JUST MAKE A JOKE?
OH, HE'S GONNA LOOOVE THIS, VIZH. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO SAY...

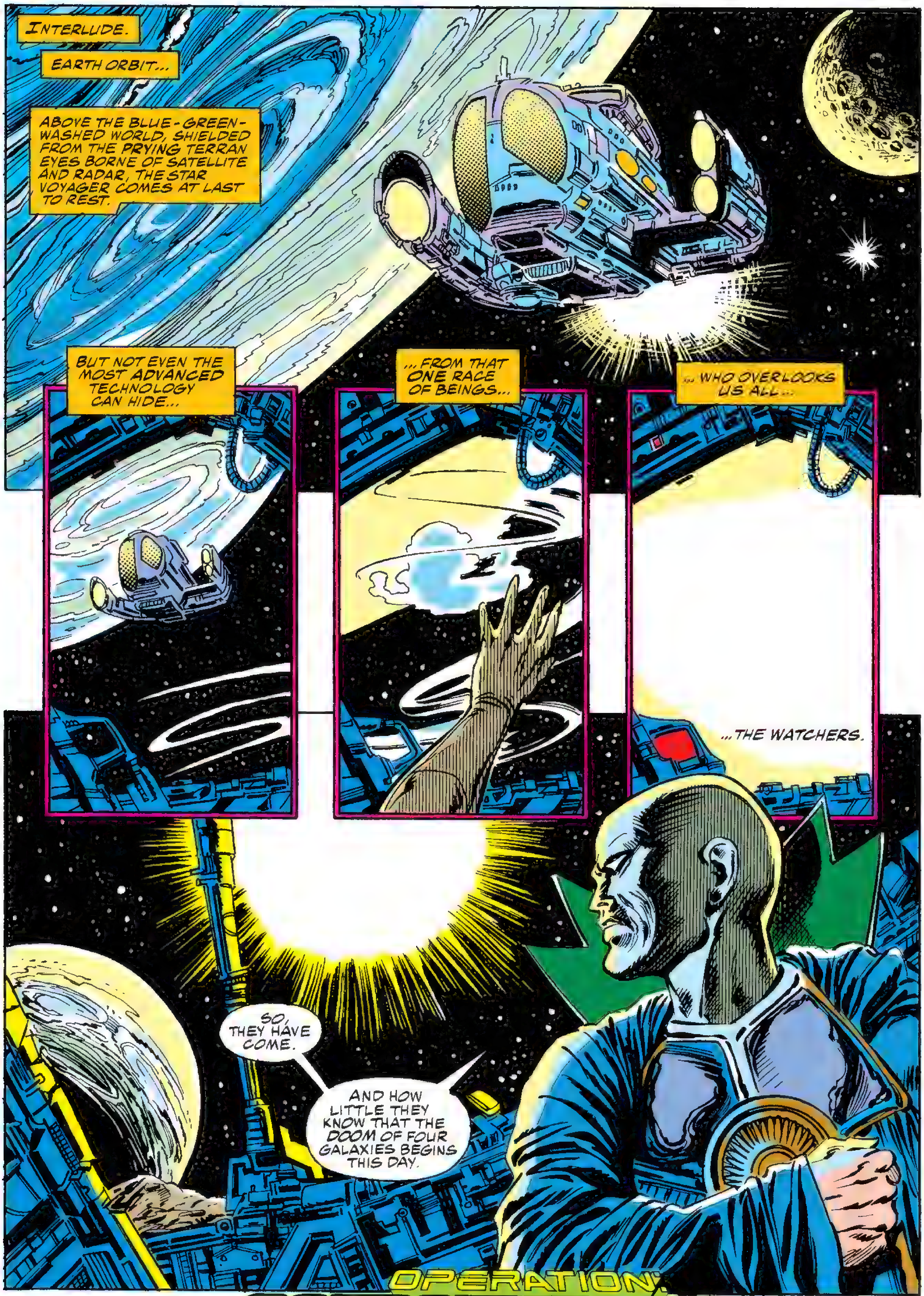

"...WE DON'T KNOW WHO THEY WERE OR WHERE THEY COME FROM?!"
PROCTOR!
BY THE FOURTH RING... WE *BARELY* MADE IT THROUGH THE *SLASH/WAY*!
YES.
IT'S THE UNUSUALLY HIGH SOLAR ACTIVITY. CAN'T BE HELPED.
I ASSUME EVERYTHING WENT WELL?
PROCTOR, *PLEASE*... CAN'T YOU SEE? HE NEEDS YOUR HELP! HE'S IN AGONY!
OF COURSE HE IS.
YOU BOTH KNEW HE WAS IN A DELICATE PHASE. THESE THINGS TAKE *TIME*, MAGDALENE.
TIME AND PATIENCE.
THE FANTASTIC FOUR SIMULATION WAS ASTOUNDINGLY EFFECTIVE. THEY DO RUSH TO EACH OTHER'S AID, THESE HEROES.
I HAVE TO ADMIT, I WAS DELIGHTED THAT CRYSTAL SAW THE TRANSMISSION OF JOHNNY STORM'S IMAGE. IT GAVE THE ENSNAREMENT AN *EMOTIONAL* CONTEXT IT WOULD HAVE OTHERWISE LACKED.
OLD LOVES STRIKE A CHORD, MAGDALENE?
PROCTOR...!
THE SCENARIO WENT WELL... THEY ARE CONFUSED... SURPRISED. IT WAS EVERYTHING YOU WANTED!
HE IS IN PAIN, PROCTOR.


THERE! THE DEED IS DONE! ARE YOU SATISFIED NOW?
THE CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF HIS BRAIN HAS BEEN RE-ALIGNED...
...THE PAIN WILL SUBSIDE...
ZZMMMMMMMMMM
...A NIGHT'S REST WILL SEE HIM GOOD AS NEW.
YOU NEVER SAID THE MISSION WOULD PUT HIM AT THIS MUCH RISK!
YOU PUSHED HIM INTO THIS! BY THE RINGS, PROCTOR, HE COULD HAVE DIED!
YOUR PASSION FOR HIM ALWAYS ASTOUNDS ME.
YOU DO REMEMBER YOU FELT THAT WAY FOR ME ONCE, DON'T YOU?
SWEET MAGDALENE... I KNOW I CAN NEVER FORGET.
PROCTOR, PLEASE... DON'T...
YOU SAVED MY LIFE. YOU WERE KIND.
YOU HAVE MY ETERNAL GRATITUDE... BUT...
GRATITUDE?
STOP--BEFORE I GET SICK. I FIND LOST LOVE CAN BE VERY... HUMILIATING.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR BRAIN-STRUCK LOVER, HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT...
...HE HAS TO BE...
...AND THEN WE'LL HAVE OUR REVENGE ON CAPTAIN AMERICA AND HIS MERRY LITTLE BAND!
SMASH

INTERLUDE TWO.
IT IS CALLED STARCORE ONE.
SINCE ITS LAUNCHING FROM EARTH SEVERAL YEARS AGO, THIS MANNED SPACECRAFT HAS BEEN STATIONED HERE, JUST OUTSIDE THE ORBIT OF MERCURY...
...GATHERING DATA AND RESEARCHING THE MYRIAD MYSTERIES OF THE SUN.
BUT IT WAS NOT UNTIL TODAY THAT STARCORE'S MISSION SEEMED SO URGENT...
...OR SO GRIM.
THE REPORT ON THE LATEST FLARE, DR. CORBEAU.
IT IS WORSE THAN WE FEARED.
THAT'S PUTTING IT MILDLY, MIKHAIL.
THESE FLARE EVENTS ARE INCREASING EXPONENTIALLY. I'VE NEVER SEEN THE CHROMOSPHERE THIS ACTIVE... THIS VOLATILE.
GOOD LORD -- THE SUN'S ENTIRE ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELD HAS BEEN SNAPPING BACK AND FORTH LIKE A RUBBER BAND!
PETER, YOU'VE SEEN THE RESULTS OF THE COMPUTER MODEL. IF THESE ...EVENTS... CONTINUE AT THEIR PRESENT RATE...
I KNOW, TALIA. I KNOW.
THE QUESTION IS, WHAT DO WE DO NOW, MY FRIENDS...
...CALL HOME AND WARN OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES? AND WHAT GOOD WOULD THAT DO?
AFTER ALL, THERE'S NO PLACE TO HIDE WHEN YOUR SUN GOES NOVA. NO PLACE AT ALL.
INTERLUDE ENDS.


AVENGERS MANSION.
THE RECORDS ROOM.
THIS IS THE LAST HOLOGRAPHIC RECORD WE HAVE OF THE SWORDSMAN.
IT'S ONE OF HIS TRAINING SESSIONS AT THE OLD MANSION, TAKEN SHORTLY BEFORE HE WAS KILLED.
YOU REALLY SOUND SURE THIS GUY IS DEAD, CAP...
...BUT THE 'SWORDSMAN' WE MET SEEMED TO KNOW THINGS...
...LIKE THE FACT THE REAL THOR WAS HIS MENTOR WHEN HE JOINED THE AVENGERS. THAT'S NOT EXACTLY PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE.
AND IF HE IS A FAKE, OUT TO GET THE AVENGERS... WOULDN'T IT HAVE MADE MORE SENSE TO REJOIN AS AN ALLY AND THEN ATTACK?
THAT'S HOW I WOULD'VE DONE IT.
NOT THAT I'M PLANNING ANYTHING LIKE THAT, OF COURSE.
THAT'S A RELIEF, THOR.
I, FOR ONE, WAS STARTING TO GET NERVOUS.
CAPTAIN AMERICA, AS PER THE BLACK WIDOW'S REQUEST, I HAVE ACCESSED ALL MY MEMORY BANKS REGARDING THE SWORDSMAN AND COMPARED THEM WITH THE MAN WE MET TODAY.
BASIC BODILY STATISTICS SUCH AS WEIGHT AND HEIGHT TO MATCH. THERE IS A 1.523 PERCENT MARGIN OF ERROR, HOWEVER, DUE TO MY REPROGRAMMING.
I UNDERSTAND, VISION.
BUT WHAT ABOUT THIS "PROCTOR" CHARACTER THEY BOTH MENTIONED?
A SEARCH OF OUR RECORDS, CROSS-REFERENCING WITH THOSE OF SHIELD AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR, HAVE YIELDED NOTHING. THE NAME REMAINS A MYSTERY.


DANE... YOU'VE STUDIED THE TAPES.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
CAP, YOU KNOW THAT THE WAY A PERSON *MOVES*, THEIR BASIC BODY LANGUAGE CAN BE AS *INDIVIDUAL* AND AS TELLING AS A FINGERPRINT.
I'VE MADE IT MY *BUSINESS* TO BECOME AN EXPERT IN THIS AREA.
ANTICIPATING THE MOVES OF AN OPPONENT BEFORE HE *CUT ME DOWN* SEEMED LIKE THE *SENSIBLE* THING IF I WANTED TO GET TO ENJOY MY SOCIAL SECURITY.
SIMPLY PUT, THE FIGHTING STYLE OF THE ORIGINAL SWORDSMAN AND THE MAN WE MET TODAY ARE... *IDENTICAL*.
EITHER SOMEONE SLAVISHLY IMITATED HIS EVERY NUANCE... OR...
...AND I DON'T *BELIEVE* I'M SAYING THIS...
...THAT *WAS* THE SWORDSMAN WE MET TODAY!
IF SO... HIS TORTURED SOUL WAS BROUGHT BACK FROM BEYOND THE STYX BY THE *DEMONESS* WHO DIDST STAND AT HIS SIDE!
FOR ONLY A SORCERESS COULD INFLICT SUCH *PAIN* ON THE PRINCE OF POWER!
ON A MORE SCIENTIFIC NOTE... COULD HE HAVE BEEN A CLONE?
CLONES, BY NATURE, DON'T INHERIT THE *LEARNED* SKILLS OF THE ORIGINAL, CRYSTAL.
IF ONLY I'D BEEN *QUICKER*--! WE WOULD HAVE HAD THEM BOTH!
THERE'S NO USE MOURNING MIGHT-HAVE-BEENS, THOR.
WHAT MATTERS IS THAT WE'VE SUFFERED A *MAJOR* SECURITY BREACH. LORD ONLY KNOWS WHAT ELSE HAS BEEN INFILTRATED.
WHOEVER OR *WHATEVER* THIS SWORDSMAN CHARACTER MAY BE CAN ONLY MEAN THAT THE AVENGERS HAVE A NEW, UNKNOWN, AND VERY *DANGEROUS* ENEMY.
AND WE BETTER FIND OUT *ALL* WE CAN -- BECAUSE THE NEXT TIME *HE* OR *SHE* ATTACKS, WE MAY NOT BE AS *LUCKY* AS WE WERE TODAY.


INTERLUDE.
EARTH ORBIT...
ABOVE THE BLUE-GREEN-WASHED WORLD, SHIELDED FROM THE PRYING TERRAN EYES BORNE OF SATELLITE AND RADAR, THE STAR VOYAGER COMES AT LAST TO REST.
BUT NOT EVEN THE MOST ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY CAN HIDE...
...FROM THAT ONE RACE OF BEINGS...
...WHO OVERLOOKS US ALL...
...THE WATCHERS.
SO, THEY HAVE COME.
AND HOW LITTLE THEY KNOW THAT THE DOOM OF FOUR GALAXIES BEGINS THIS DAY.

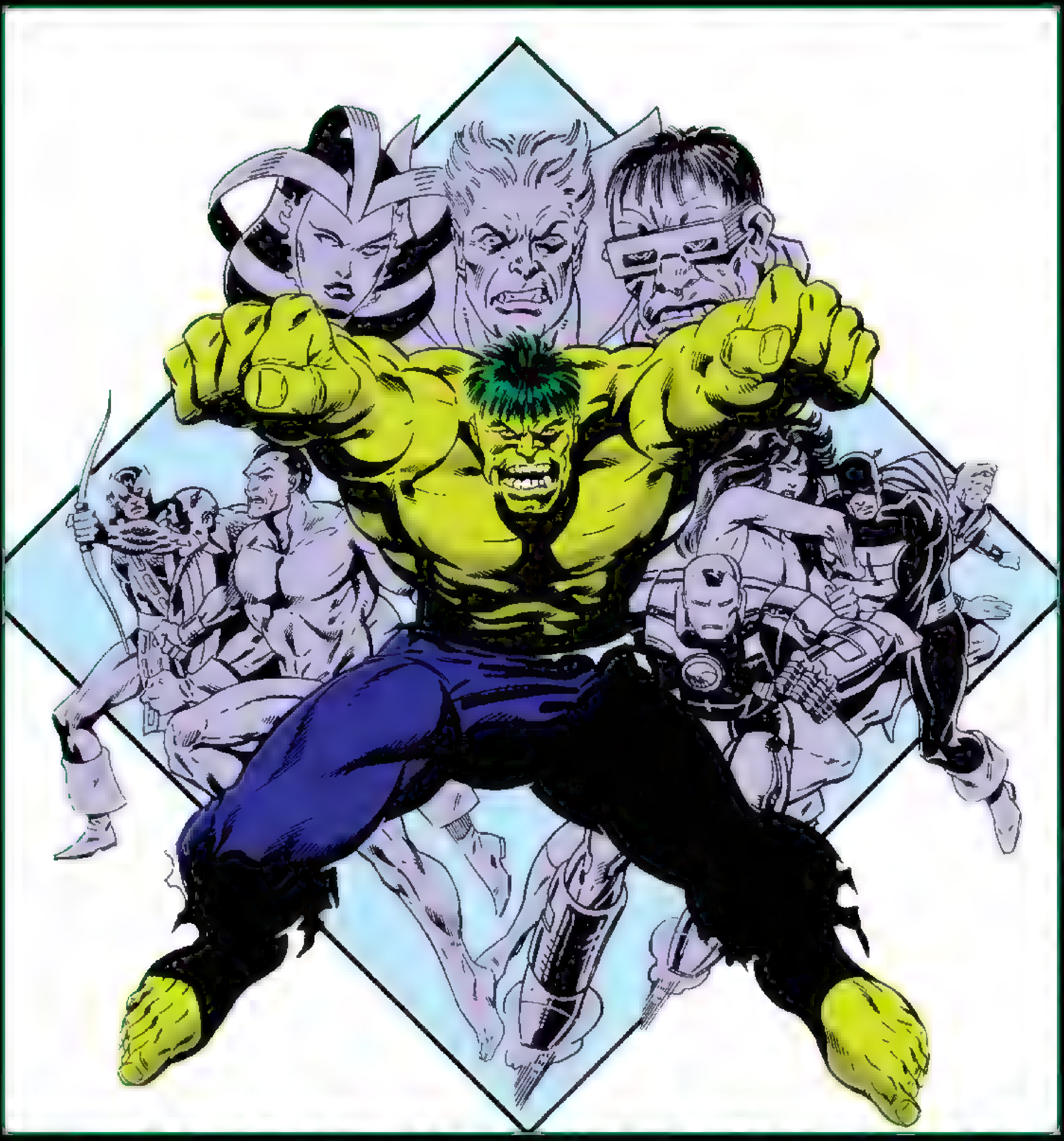
YOU MUST READ CAPTAIN AMERICA #398 NEXT MONTH FOR THE FIRST PART OF --

OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM

IT'LL STUN YOU!

MARVEL COMICS
OFFICIAL MARVEL ZOMBIE™ MAGAZINE!
MARVEL AGE®
TM & © 1991 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN
101
JUNE
UK 60p
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MILGROM
PLUS A 5-PAGE PUNISHER P.O.V.™ PREVIEW!
ANNUAL
SUMMER FUN(?) ISSUE
PLUS: POWER PACK® ON TV!

"SUBTERRANEAN WARS" PROMOTIONAL ART AND ARTICLE EXCERPT, FROM *MARVEL AGE #101*



THE *AVENGERS* STORYLINE CHRONICLES THE PLANET-WIDE WAR OF WHICH THE PEOPLE OF EARTH ARE COMPLETELY UNAWARE. THAT'S BECAUSE IT TAKES PLACE IN THE STRANGE UNDERGROUND WORLD OF SUBTERRANEA. FROM THE VERY BEGINNING OF MARVEL HISTORY, THIS UNDERGROUND REALM HAS BEEN FILLED WITH SINISTER FIGURES WHO HAVE MENACED THE SURFACE WORLD TIME AND AGAIN. DEBUTING IN *FANTASTIC FOUR #1* WAS THE MOLE MAN, THE NEARSIGHTED MASTERMIND WHO COMMANDS VAST ARMIES OF SUBTERRANEANS AND GIGANTIC MONSTERS.

IN *HULK #5* CAME TYRANNUS, THE MAD EMPEROR FROM ANCIENT ROME, WHO DISCOVERED AN UNDERGROUND FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH AND THUS WAS ABLE TO LIVE TO THE PRESENT DAY, AND PLOTTED TO MAKE THE SURFACE WORLD HIS NEW EMPIRE. HE ALSO RULES A RACE OF SUBTERRANEANS WILLING TO WAGE WAR ON HIS COMMAND. LIKEWISE, THE IRON MAN SAGA IN *TALES OF SUSPENSE* INTRODUCED US TO KALA, EMPRESS OF THE NETHERWORLDERS, AN UNDERGROUND CIVILIZATION DESCENDED FROM ATLANTEANS WHO SURVIVED THE GREAT CATACLYSM THAT SANK THEIR CONTINENT THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO.

THE MOLE MAN AND TYRANNUS HAVE BEEN SLUGGING IT OUT FOR YEARS, SINCE WAY BACK IN *TALES TO ASTONISH #80-81*! SINCE THEN THEIR BATTLES HAVE CONTINUED THROUGH THE PAGES OF THE *X-MEN*, *INCREDIBLE HULK* AND *FANTASTIC FOUR*.

LET'S NOT FORGET GROTESK, THE PRINCE OF A RACE OF SUBTERRANEANS. AFTER SEEING HIS PEOPLE WIPED OUT BY NUCLEAR TESTS FROM THE SURFACE MEN, HE VOWED TO EXTERMINATE ALL HUMANITY. OR HOW ABOUT THE LAVA MEN, WHO'VE BEEN BATTLING THOR SINCE *JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #97*? THEY'RE DEMON WORSHIPPERS WHO CAN CREATE GREAT HEAT AND CONTROL THE FLOW OF VOLCANIC LAVA. FINALLY, THERE ARE THE DEVIANTS, FROM JACK KIRBY'S *ETERNALS* SERIES, A DIVERGENT HUMAN RACE WHO RULED THE EARTH BEFORE THE SINKING OF ATLANTIS AND LONG TO DO SO AGAIN.

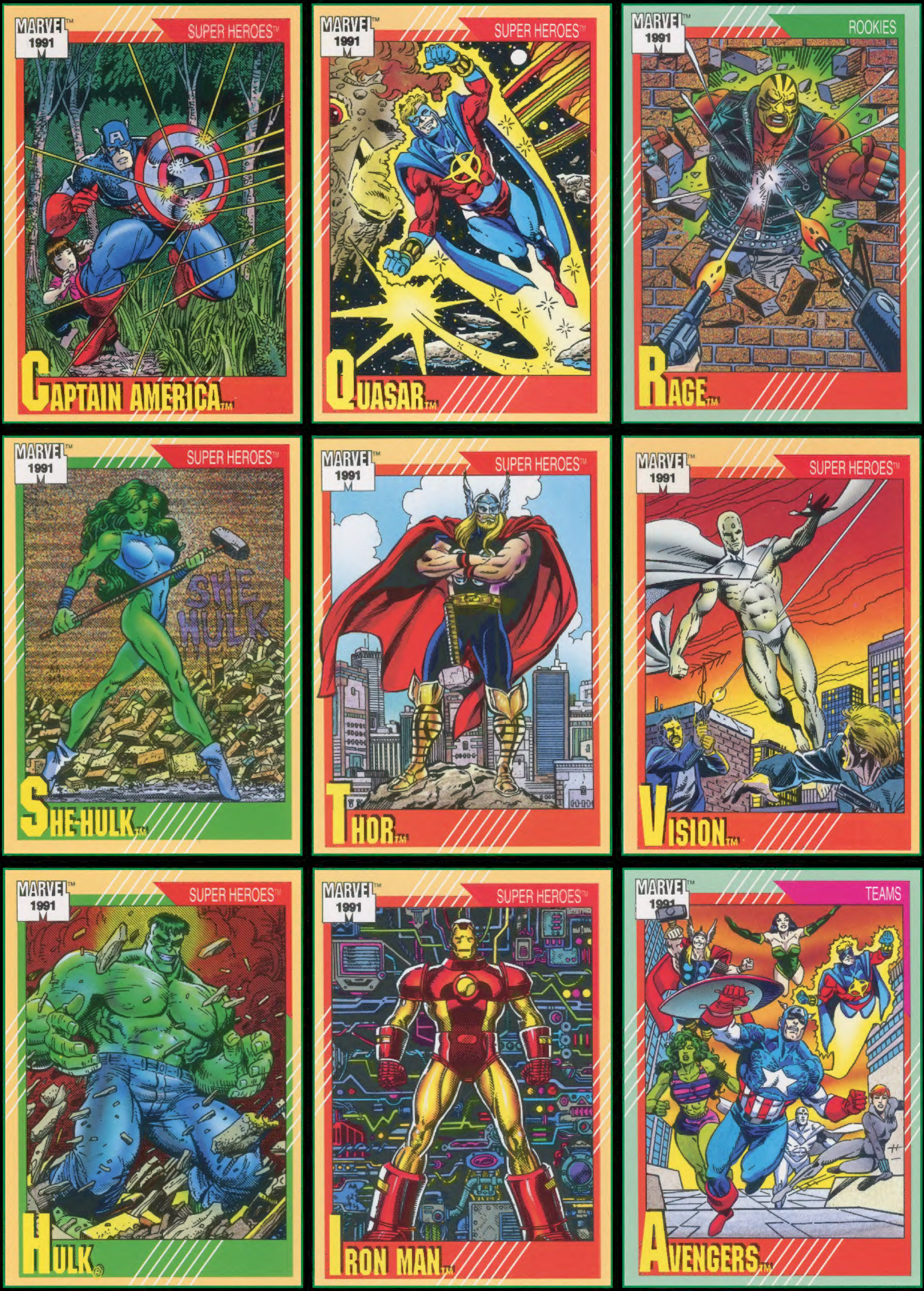
THE STORYLINE BEGINS IN THE *AVENGERS* ANNUAL, WHEN THE TEAM IS ALERTED BY THE LAVA MEN AND OTHER SUBTERRANEANS BURSTING THROUGH THE EARTH'S SURFACE. AFTER FORCING THEM BACK UNDERGROUND, THE AVENGERS LEARN THAT THE CREATURES WERE ACTUALLY FLEEING A MASSIVE WAR BENEATH THE SURFACE. LONGTIME ENEMIES TYRANNUS AND MOLE MAN HAVE JOINED FORCES WITH GROTESK TO FIGHT OFF AN ARMY OF MUTATE MONSTERS.

THE AVENGERS MUST ULTIMATELY CONTEND WITH THE DEVIANTS, WHO ARE NOW HEADED BY WHAT WRITER ROY THOMAS COMPARES TO NAPOLEON. THIS SUBTERRANEAN WAR SETS OFF MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS FOR *INCREDIBLE HULK ANNUAL #17*, *NAMOR, THE SUB-MARINER ANNUAL #1* AND *IRON MAN ANNUAL #12*. THE WAR REACHES ITS CLIMAX IN *AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL #6*. SINCE THIS IS THE LAST GROUP OF ANNUALS TO APPEAR, NO DETAILS ON THE CREATIVE TEAMS HAVE BEEN SETTLED AT PRESS TIME, ALTHOUGH I CAN REPORT THAT I'LL BE WRITING A BACKUP FEATURE ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THESE UNDERGROUND CREATURES FOR THE *AVENGERS ANNUAL*.

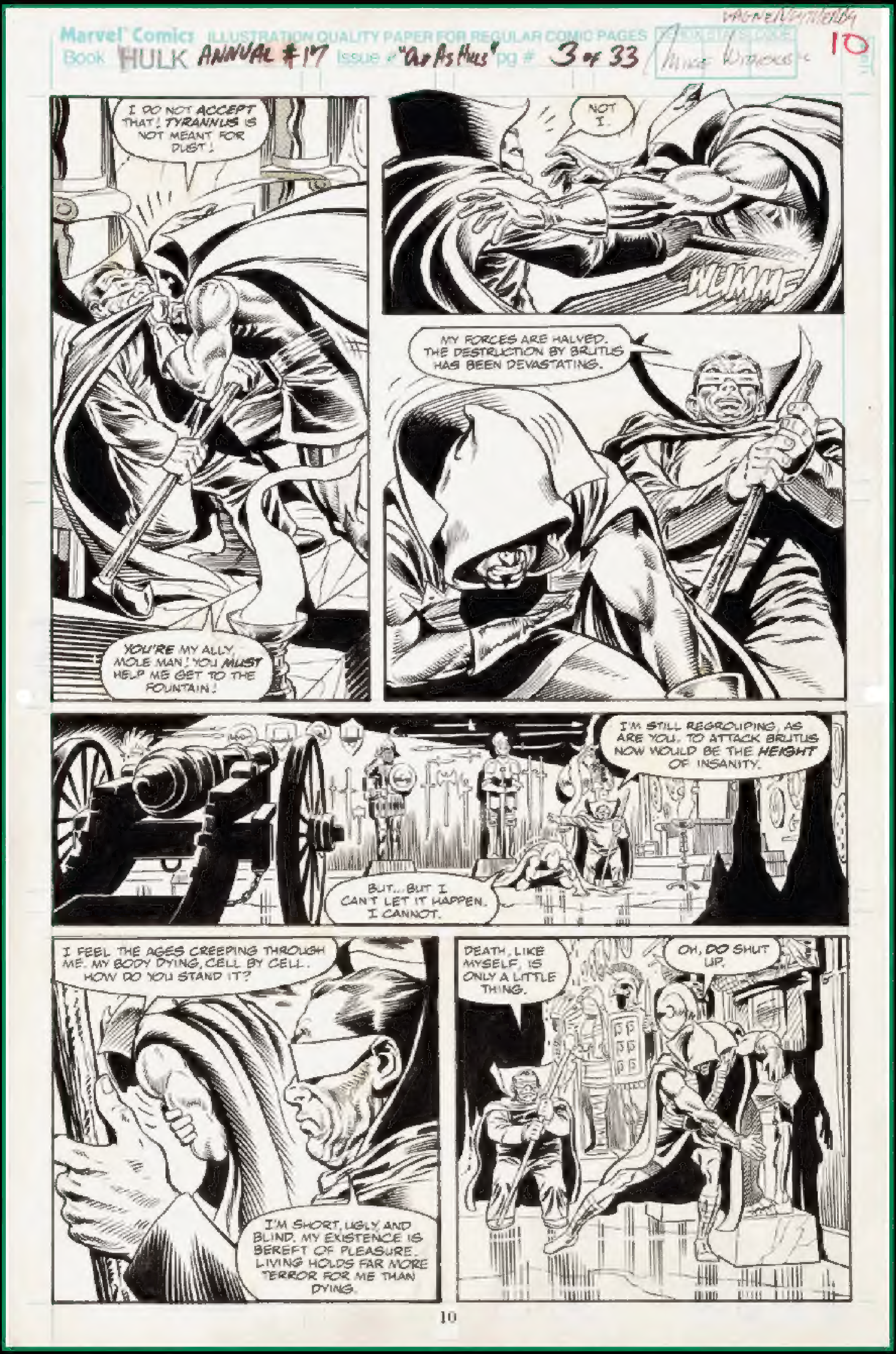
—PETER SANDERSON

VENOM™
DEATHTRAP: THE VAULT
RON LIM '92
MARVEL COMICS
DANNY FINGEROTH RON LIM JIM SANDERS FRED FREDRICKS

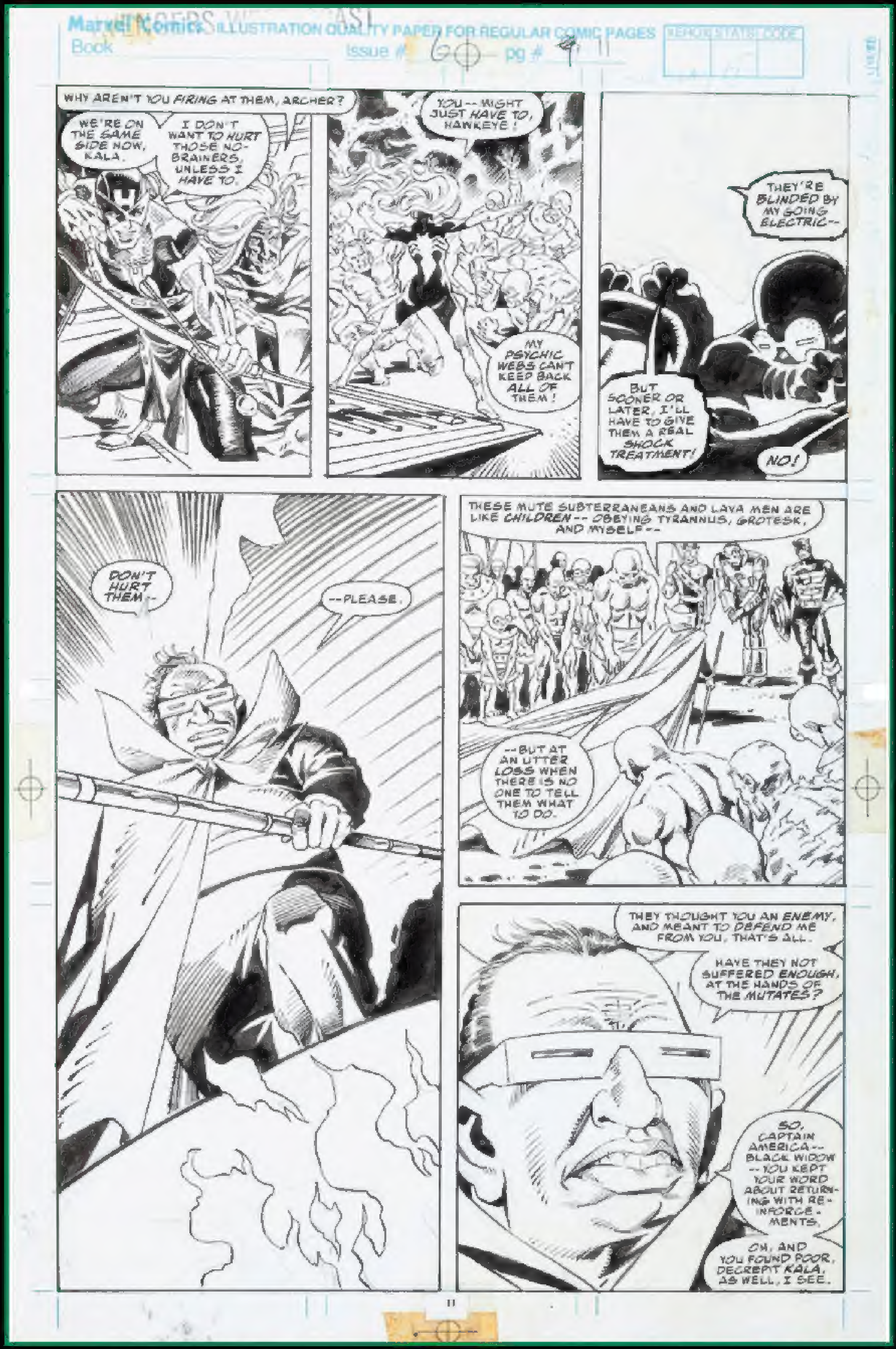
VENOM — DEATHTRAP: THE VAULT REPRINTED THE *AVENGERS: DEATH TRAP, THE VAULT GN*.
COVER ART BY RON LIM & JIM SANDERS III.


MARVEL™ 1991
SUPER HEROES™
CAPTAIN AMERICA™
MARVEL™ 1991
SUPER HEROES™
QUASAR™
MARVEL™ 1991
ROOKIES
RAGE™
MARVEL™ 1991
SUPER HEROES™
SHE HULK
SHE-HULK™
MARVEL™ 1991
SUPER HEROES™
THOR™
MARVEL™ 1991
SUPER HEROES™
VISION™
MARVEL™ 1991
SUPER HEROES™
HULK®
MARVEL™ 1991
SUPER HEROES™
IRON MAN™
MARVEL™ 1991
TEAMS
AVENGERS™

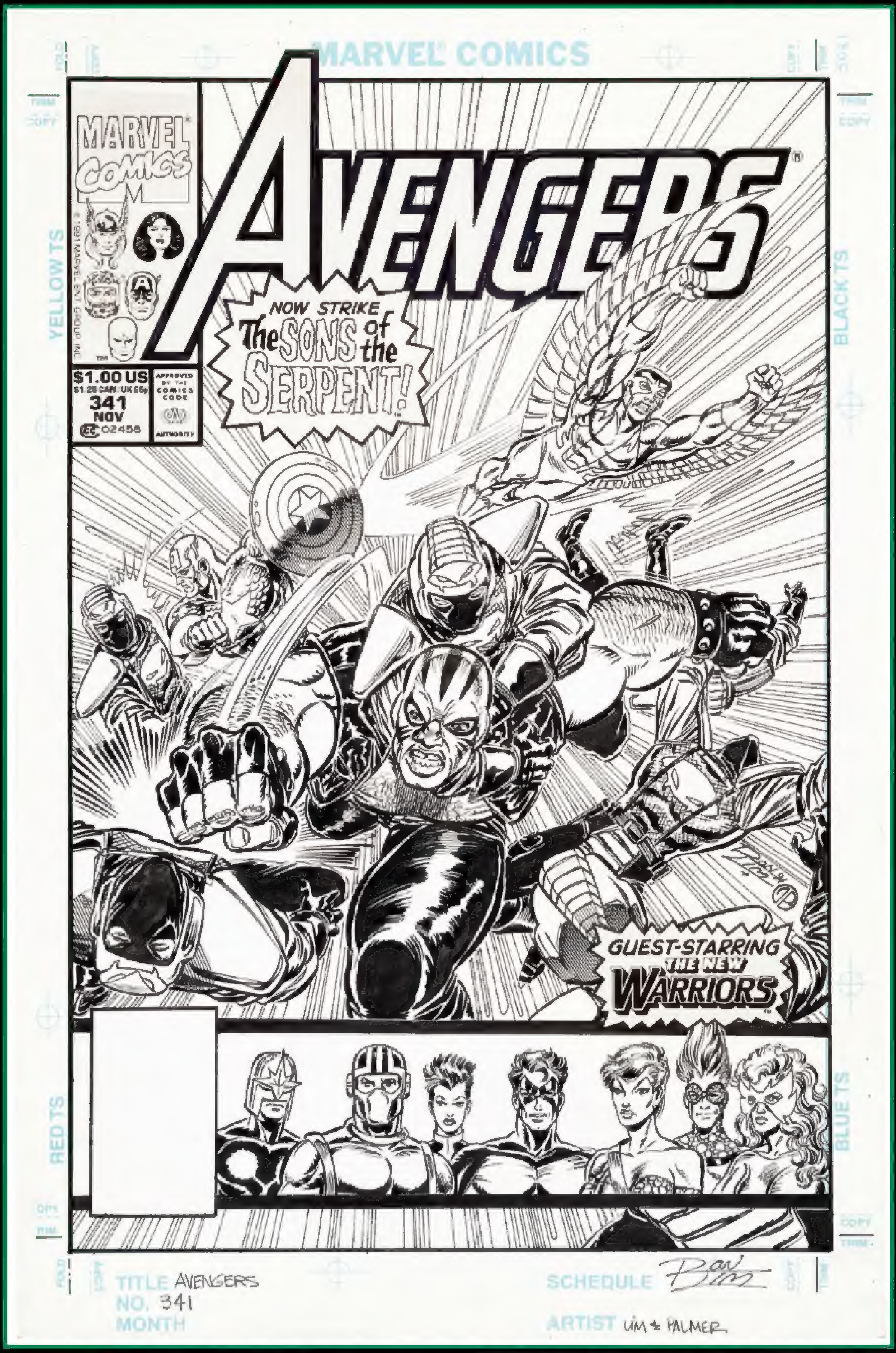
MARVEL UNIVERSE SERIES II (1991) TRADING-CARD ART BY ARTHUR ADAMS, PAUL RYAN & RON FRENZ


Marvel Comics ILLUSTRATION QUALITY PAPER FOR REGULAR COMIC PAGES
Book HULK ANNUAL #17 Issue # "Old As Hills" pg # 3 of 33
Mike Witherby
WAGNER/WITHERBY
10
I DO NOT ACCEPT THAT! TYRANNUS IS NOT MEANT FOR DUST!
NOT I.
WUMMF
MY FORCES ARE HALVED. THE DESTRUCTION BY BRUTUS HAS BEEN DEVASTATING.
YOU'RE MY ALLY, MOLE MAN! YOU MUST HELP ME GET TO THE FOUNTAIN!
I'M STILL REGROUPING, AS ARE YOU. TO ATTACK BRUTUS NOW WOULD BE THE HEIGHT OF INSANITY.
BUT... BUT I CAN'T LET IT HAPPEN. I CANNOT.
I FEEL THE AGES CREEPING THROUGH ME. MY BODY DYING, CELL BY CELL. HOW DO YOU STAND IT?
I'M SHORT, UGLY, AND BLIND. MY EXISTENCE IS BEREFT OF PLEASURE. LIVING HOLDS FAR MORE TERROR FOR ME THAN DYING.
DEATH, LIKE MYSELF, IS ONLY A LITTLE THING.
OH, DO SHUT UP.
10

INCREDIBLE HULK ANNUAL #17, PAGE 10
ART BY RON WAGNER & MIKE WITHERBY


Marvel Comics ILLUSTRATION QUALITY PAPER FOR REGULAR COMIC PAGES
Book
Issue # 6 pg # 9 11
WHY AREN'T YOU FIRING AT THEM, ARCHER?
WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE NOW, KALA.
I DON'T WANT TO HURT THOSE NO-BRAINERS, UNLESS I HAVE TO.
YOU-- MIGHT JUST HAVE TO, HAWKEYE!
MY PSYCHIC WEBS CAN'T KEEP BACK ALL OF THEM!
THEY'RE BLINDED BY MY GOING ELECTRIC--
BUT SOONER OR LATER, I'LL HAVE TO GIVE THEM A REAL SHOCK TREATMENT!
NO!
DON'T HURT THEM--
--PLEASE.
THESE MUTE SUBTERRANEANS AND LAVA MEN ARE LIKE CHILDREN -- OBEYING TYRANNUS, GROTESK, AND MYSELF--
--BUT AT AN UTTER LOSS WHEN THERE IS NO ONE TO TELL THEM WHAT TO DO.
THEY THOUGHT YOU AN ENEMY, AND MEANT TO DEFEND ME FROM YOU, THAT'S ALL.
HAVE THEY NOT SUFFERED ENOUGH, AT THE HANDS OF THE MUTATES?
SO, CAPTAIN AMERICA-- BLACK WIDOW --YOU KEPT YOUR WORD ABOUT RETURNING WITH REINFORCEMENTS.
OH, AND YOU FOUND POOR, DECREPIT KALA, AS WELL, I SEE.
11

AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL #6, PAGE 10
ART BY GEORGE FREEMAN


MARVEL COMICS
MARVEL COMICS
AVENGERS
NOW STRIKE The SONS of the SERPENT!
$1.00 US
341
NOV
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
GUEST-STARRING THE NEW WARRIORS
YELLOW TS
BLACK TS
RED TS
BLUE TS
TITLE AVENGERS
NO. 341
MONTH
SCHEDULE
ARTIST LIM & PALMER

AVENGERS #341 COVER ART BY RON LIM & TOM PALMER
COURTESY OF HERITAGEAUCTIONS.COM

TO BATTLE THE BRETHREN!

Thane Ector and his allies devastated the Collector — and now they've come for Earth. And to stop them, the Avengers must call in reserves, returnees — and a new recruit! But will the humbled Elder of the Universe aid Earth's Mightiest, or renew his collection obsession? Hate may conquer all when the Sons of the Serpent strike — unless the Avengers and New Warriors can do something about it! But how will our heroes react when a fallen comrade seemingly returns? Plus: The Subterranean Wars rage, and the Vault prison becomes a death trap filled with deadly menaces — including Venom!

VOLUME
21
1991-1992

AVENGERS #334-344 & ANNUAL #20, AVENGERS: DEATH TRAP — THE VAULT AND MATERIAL FROM INCREDIBLE HULK ANNUAL #17, NAMOR, THE SUB-MARINER ANNUAL #1, IRON MAN ANNUAL #12 & AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL #6

EPIC T

MARVEL

The Epic Collections feature the best characters and stories from Marvel's vast history. Volumes are not published in chronological order — so start your collection today with this edition!